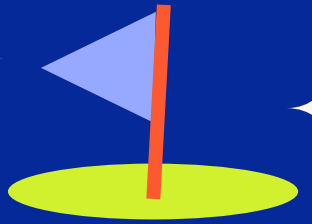
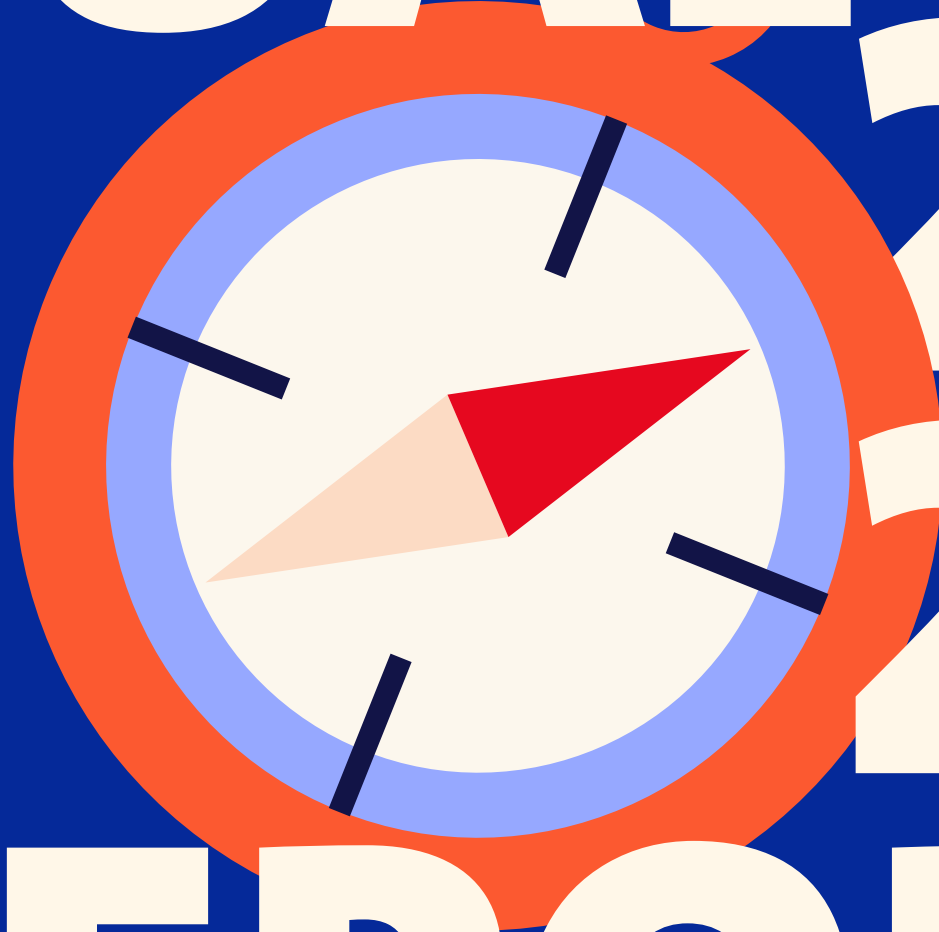


ANNUAL 2025 REPORT



Universität Hamburg
DER FORSCHUNG | DER LEHRE | DER BILDUNG



“**Moving forward means renewal and cohesion at the same time.**”

Dear University Members and Friends of the University,

Moving forward is undoubtedly the best term to describe the year 2025 at the University of Hamburg. We have built on our proven strengths, launched new initiatives, and, together, set a clear course for the future. This has highlighted the essence of our University: researchers tackling the pressing questions of the time, and students bringing fresh perspectives. In lecture halls and labs, teachers and students exchange knowledge and ideas that go far beyond the campus, and all of this is made possible by committed staff. This makes our University a dynamic center of enlightenment and reflection.

One of the year’s highlights was our successful participation in the Excellence Competition in May 2025. We were granted four clusters of excellence, thus illuminating our strength as a university and what collaborative research can achieve. Our success was the result of strong teams, reliable partners in the greater Hamburg region, and a lot of patience.

Excellence, along with tapping our potential in the long term, requires stable conditions as well as sound and reliable prospects in research, teaching, and academic affairs. At the same time, we faced the challenges of limited resources, growing expectations, and global uncertainties in 2025. However, it is precisely in times like these that we reveal our true qualities: cohesion, creative drive, and confidence in our mission to share our knowledge in our city and around the world.

The launch of our structural process shows our clear response to these challenges: the purposeful advancement of our University, with a strong focus on research, international connections, and a commitment to an open, democratic society.

I thank all University members for their extraordinary commitment in 2025.

A handwritten signature in white ink, consisting of stylized initials and a surname, belonging to Prof. Dr. Hauke Heekeren.

Prof. Dr. Hauke Heekeren
President of the University of Hamburg

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Ready to Go



Looking ahead, where do we stick to familiar pathways, and where do we want to forge new ground? Have we got everything we need? And do we need everything we have? Critical reflection on our own routines brings development. What can we rely on as tried and true? Where do we see an opportunity for change? We are **ready to go!**



Contents

Clusters of Excellence

University of Hamburg
in Dialogue

Clusters of Excellence



Four times seven equals excellence

Federal Excellence Initiative continues funding for Hamburg's clusters of excellence

The University of Hamburg has consolidated its top position among the leading group of German research universities. This secures funding into the next round from January 2026 for the four clusters of excellence that were created in 2018: Climate, Climatic Change, and Society (CLICCS) (climate research), CUI: Advanced Imaging of Matter (photon and nanosciences), Quantum Universe (mathematics, particle physics, astrophysics, cosmology), and Understanding Written Artefacts (manuscript research). In addition, the University of Hamburg is involved with several researchers in the Hamburg University of Technology's new cluster of

excellence, BlueMat: Water-Driven Materials, which is developing sustainable, water-activated materials. The clusters of excellence have prevailed in a highly competitive process and will each receive up to €10 million in funding per year for seven years.

Through this success in the ExStra competition, the University of Hamburg will further expand its role at the center of the excellent research hub in Hamburg and provide vital ideas and inspiration for research, science, and society. Hamburg's second mayor Katharina Fegebank also emphasized the nonmaterial importance of promoting excellence:



ExStra competition

The Excellence Strategy (ExStra) of the federal and state governments aims at strengthening Germany as a center of research in the long term and further improving its international competitiveness.

The ExStra competition is organized by the German Research Foundation (DFG) and the German Council of Science and Humanities. The excellence competition features two lines of funding.

Two

funding lines:

Clusters of Excellence

Second funding round 1 January 2026–31 December 2032; 70 clusters of excellence at 43 universities, total annual funding of €539 million

Universities of Excellence

Second funding round 1 January 2027–31 December 2033; funding prerequisites: at least two successful clusters of excellence, or at least three in a consortium; total annual funding of €10–15 million for individual universities, and up to €28 million for consortia



“The fact that the federal and state governments are jointly providing such clear financial and nonmaterial support in times of serious global crises, growing threats to democracy, and attacks on academic freedom is an important sign for strong, independent, and sustainable science and thus for a future worth living.”

Although a fifth application, the Gateway to Health research initiative, did not receive funding approval from the Excellence Commission, it still deserves great recognition for its outstanding scientific concept. It involves researchers from the fields of medicine, biosciences, humanities, and social sciences whose goal is not only to investigate the development of infectious diseases

but also examine their consequences and social impact on a global level and develop prevention approaches. “Thanks to the strong partners at the site, this project nevertheless remains an important driving force for infection research in Hamburg,” explained Prof. Dr. Hauke Heekeren, president of the University of Hamburg.

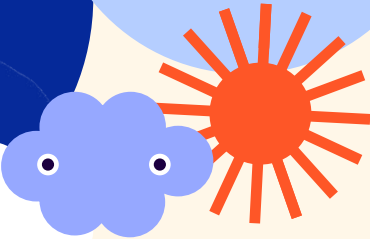
But what exactly is behind abbreviations such as CUI and CLICCS? What is happening in Manuscript Cultures? And how far have researchers already advanced in Quantum Universe? On the following pages, the teams introduce the individual clusters and answer these and many other questions.

Cluster of Excellence Climate, Climatic Change, and Society

Bringing climate knowledges into everyday decision-making



Prof. Johanna Baehr, CLICCS spokesperson



[Visit the CLICCS website](#)

In climate research, we often work with scenarios, think through options, and calculate probabilities. The Cluster of Excellence Climate, Climatic Change, and Society (CLICCS) also faces scenarios for its own future: Do we stand still, or keep moving forward? For us, the decision to grant us

funding marks the beginning of a new chapter. We will investigate which climate futures are plausible—and how desired climate futures can be realized.

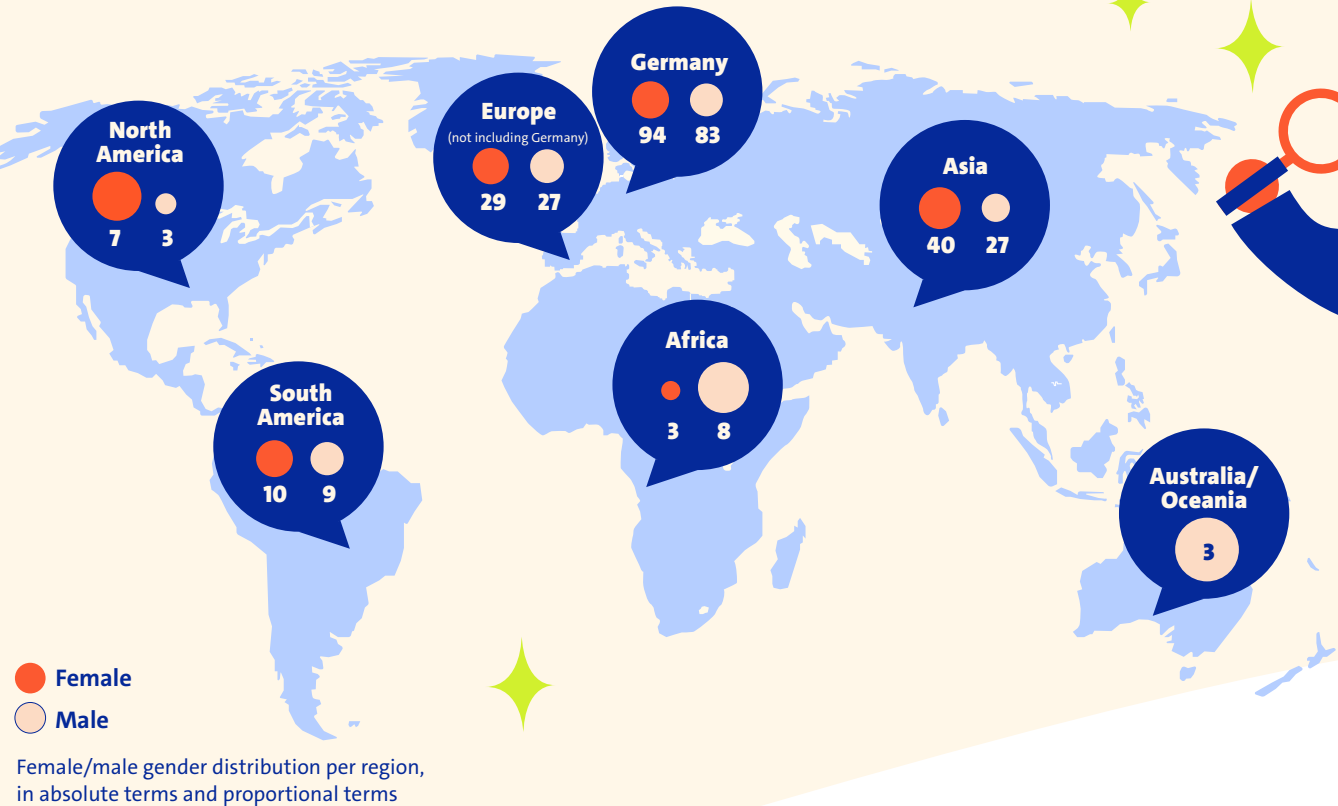
As an oceanographer, I can calculate how currents change or how heat is distributed in the ocean. We need to work across disciplines if we want to properly ascertain how societies might react to climate change and how expectations and power structures enable or block necessary action. In CLICCS, we bring together natural and social sciences to understand the interactions between climate change and society. How do laws, economic interests, and cultural ideas shape our climate reality? What futures are realistic? And what will our everyday lives look like?

We understand research as a discussion, for example between politics, the economy, and society in our study “Anticipating Hot Summer Nights.” We investigate how German households react to seasonal climate forecasts, how information about expected heat waves influences

their trust in research, and whether they change their behavior based on this information. Do they invest in adaptation measures, ranging from putting a fan in the bedroom to supporting long-term climate policy? Our experience shows that knowledge works. Those who receive a realistic assessment think differently about risks and decide accordingly. Climate research thus becomes directly relevant for everyday decision-making.

This will also be visible in the near future, with CLICCS researchers from a range of disciplines soon moving into the House of the Earth on Bundesstraße. Natural and social scientists will be working under one roof, creating a forum for an open dialogue with society.

[Watch the video](#)



number of women has been consistently about 50 percent, an important step for more diversity in academia.

The graduate school represents research-oriented and interdisciplinary education in climate research, as is reflected in the diversity of subjects. At SICSS, researchers work on doctorates for example in atmospheric and ocean research, climate modeling, or sociology, economics, political sciences, peace research, and law.

Its success speaks for itself: More than 70 percent of graduates continue to work in research, many at renowned institutions across the world. Others move into politics, international organizations, or into the business world and bring the expertise they gained in Hamburg to bear on their new environments.

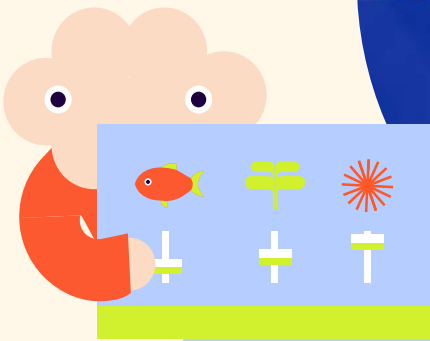
The School of Integrated Climate and Earth System Sciences (SICSS) is an international graduate school that provides support for all career levels, such as doctoral projects, but also postdoctoral and senior researcher status.

Since its founding in 2008, SICSS has taken on 343 doctoral researchers from 48 countries from Asia, Europe, Africa, North America, Australia and South America — with China and India being particularly well represented. Over the cohorts, the

International early career researchers for global questions



Visit the SICSS website



At the controls: How far has climate protection come?

Futurium — Berlin’s museum of the future — hosts interactive exhibits on how the world could soon look. The Hamburg Cluster of Excellence Climate, Climatic Change, and Society (CLICCS) is also represented there with a game that allows visitors to guess how far society has come in terms of climate protection. There are 10 very different processes, including consumption, knowledge production, and UN climate policies that all need to be on track to reach climate goals. CLICCS members are engaged in these key processes. “We put together

the Futurium exhibit because we believe uncovering complex interrelationships in a playful way is more interesting” explains Professor Anita Engels. “Sometimes, just the push of a button provides whole new insights. We want to spark discussions on how the processes that are holding us back can be brought into line.” Anita Engels is coeditor of the Hamburg Climate Futures Outlooks series. The key studies by CLICCS contain the research behind the game.

[Read the interview with Anita Engel](#)

Seeing the bigger picture

The Systemic Risk Conference at the University of Hamburg

Climate change, is it just one of many burning global problems? Yes and no. Climate change actually serves to amplify crises like social inequality, resource exploitation, and increasing food and energy prices. Individual shocks like a drought can trigger a chain reaction that leads to a system breakdown.

How do these processes work? And, most importantly, what can we do to prevent them? This was the question facing over 100 participants from research and practice who attended the Systemic Risk Conference at the University of Hamburg on 24 September 2025. The organizer, Jana Sillmann, and her team from the Cluster of Excellence Climate, Climatic Change, and Society (CLICCS) invited experts from large international institutions like the UN, NASA, and the International Court



of Justice to sit around one table to discuss systemic solutions for systemic crises, bringing together interdisciplinary approaches that appropriately reflect our complex reality.

[Visit the conference website](#)



Between uncertainty and hope

CLICCS at the Climate Conference

Exactly 10 years after the Paris Agreement, the Brazilian president hailed the UN Climate Change Conference (COP30) in Belém as the “COP of implementation and truth.” Hopes were high; ultimately, however, there was once again no agreement on a concrete phase out of oil, gas, and coal. The urgently needed funding for climate change adaptation also remains vague.

The Franco-German-Brazilian research project ClimaCOP 2, which involves five CLICCS researchers from Hamburg, is dedicated to these developments in international climate policy and the dynamics of the negotiations. Prof. Stefan Aykut, Anna Fünfgeld, Dr. Eduardo Gresse, Lea Kammler, and Dr. Jan Wilkens are researching the process and effect of COP30, particularly the role of promises resulting from climate negotiations.

How can agreements remain effective despite growing doubts? What happens when these agreements are not honored? The researchers are investigating promises and narratives making them meaningful, such as in discussions about sustainable transformation, energy transition, and climate justice. Yet, they are also used to justify delaying climate action. Using a collective ethnographic approach, the team documents and analyzes a range of topics negotiated at COP as well as conflicts and discussions between countries, civil society, and the private sector. This is research conducted in the middle of the ongoing negotiations, and CLICCS political scientist Dr. Jan Wilkens outlines his impressions of COP30.

I followed the negotiations for the Just Transition Work Program. The interesting part is not merely how parties define the concept of just transition but also how it ought to be implemented. It also reflects the current relationship between the so-called Global North and Global South as well as the cracks in both groups. My focus was on the interventions by Arab states and the role of civil society. While some Gulf states undermined the negotiations, the countries most affected by climate change were barely visible.



1

Jan, what was your experience at COP30 in Belém?

The proximity to the Amazon and the visible presence of indigenous people underlined the urgency and made it a special place. Following several years in which the conference took place in authoritarian petro-states, it was great that civil society was present within and outside the venue. But it became clearer with every day that passed that the high expectations would not be met.

2

What did you and your team investigate there?

I followed the negotiations for the Just Transition Work Program. The interesting part is not merely how parties define the concept of just transition but also how it ought to be implemented. It also reflects the current relationship between the so-called Global North and Global South as well as the cracks in both groups. My focus was on the interventions by Arab states and the role of civil society. While some Gulf states undermined the negotiations, the countries most affected by climate change were barely visible.

3

What is the most important observation for you?

Brazil sought to inject new momentum into the COP process during what are challenging times for multilateralism. To achieve this, the presidency broke with previous negotiating strategies to some extent. At a time of rising authoritarian tendencies around the world, COP has also been important as a space for civil society actors. Without a strong global civil society, governments will not keep their promises.

Cluster of Excellence CUI: Advanced Imaging of Matter

The dynamics of nature and their role in creating new functionalities

We are delighted and honored that the German Research Foundation (DFG) has decided to continue funding our cluster. In the coming funding period, we intend to continue our strategy and keep exploring new ideas and scientific questions that are socially relevant and address the major challenges facing science today. For instance, how do the fundamental building blocks of nature—atoms, molecules, and electrons—interact with one another, and how do they influence the properties of systems in the process? We are particularly interested in the dynamics of nature. Our work therefore focuses on the question of how microscopic processes shape a material's properties



The spokespersons for CUI:AIM

Prof. Klaus Sengstock
Prof. Francesca Calegari
Prof. Henry Chapman

Video messages:

Prof. Calegari

Prof. Chapman

and how this knowledge can be applied.

Our work provides significant impetus for innovation in the development of new materials and technologies—such as the next generation of quantum computers; new technologies and light-based applications in industry, medicine, and sustainable energy conversion; and the development of functional nanomaterials and innovative X-ray methods that open up new avenues in drug development and manufacturing. In other words, our cluster of excellence designs materials and new functionalities for the future of humanity!

One of our cluster's particular strengths is interdisciplinary collaboration. We have 185 researchers from the fields of physics, biophysics, and chemistry collaborating on both theoretical and practical work, supported by approximately 170 additional team members. Together with DESY, the Max Planck Institute for the Structure and Dynamics of

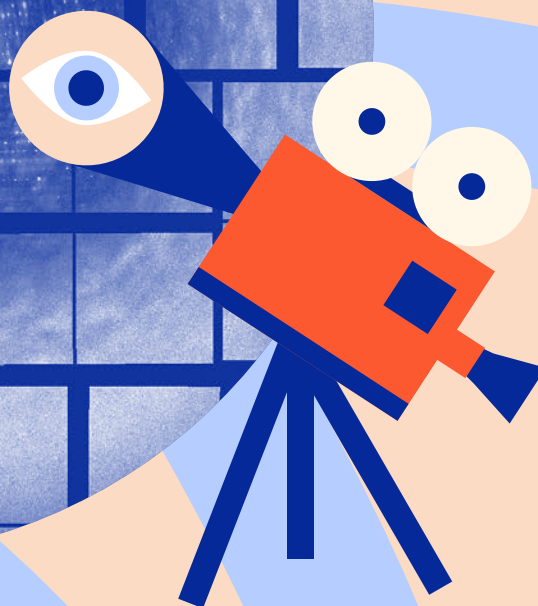
Matter, and the European XFEL, we have succeeded in establishing a common scientific language and forging new connections between these fields—such as publishing more than 1,300 articles during the 2019–2025 funding period.

In addition, CUI: Advanced Imaging of Matter also offers fantastic opportunities to transform the academic world in general. For example, we are committed to promoting gender parity in academia through initiatives such as the Mildred Dresselhaus Guest Professorship and the Louise Johnson Fellowship. As a result, we have been able to successfully support female professors, doctoral candidates, and postdoctoral researchers in their careers and research over the past 10 years, and we are especially pleased that we will be able to continue doing so in the future.

Visit the CUI website

Filming the invisible

The image of a microcrystal was captured using a femtosecond X-ray pulse from a free-electron laser. The researchers combine many thousands of such images to determine the atomic structure of a protein.



A little over a century ago, humanity gained a new understanding of matter. The development of quantum mechanics revealed the structure of atoms and explained phenomena such as chemical bonds, the behavior of semiconductors, and the interaction between light and materials. These discoveries led to the invention of the transistor and the laser, as well as microchips, solar cells, and particle accelerators. The quantum nature of matter gives rise to many important properties, such as magnetism, superconductivity,

and superfluidity. Although quantum mechanics is the most precise theory in science, its probabilistic nature makes it difficult to predict phenomena in materials—except in the simplest ones. For example, it is not yet possible to develop stable superconductors that function at room temperature, or to design materials that convert solar energy as efficiently as biological systems.

The Cluster of Excellence CUI: Advanced Imaging of Matter focuses on how to

predict the emergent properties of countless atomic arrangements in order to learn how to develop materials and chemical compounds with new properties and functions. To do this, the atomic components of matter must be tracked at the same speed at which they move and interact with one another. Filming the incredibly fast movements of nuclei and electrons is an attempt to achieve this. For example, electrons can orbit atoms in about 0.1 femtoseconds, or 10⁻¹⁶ seconds. It is only now that this type of imaging has become possible, thanks to advances in ultrafast lasers, the precise trapping and cooling of quantum matter, and accelerator-based X-ray lasers such as the European XFEL in Hamburg.

The variety of potential functional materials, molecules, and nanoparticles is essentially infinite. However, by transcending discipline-specific boundaries within the cluster, new concepts can be developed to significantly expand the potential applications of basic research. This interdisciplinary

approach offers new insights into a wide range of important topics, such as:

- how quantum computers might work
- how superconductors can be produced and stabilized at room temperature
- how to measure the structure and dynamics of proteins at body temperature to accelerate drug discovery
- how chemical processes can become more energy-efficient and thus more sustainable
- how hybrid nanoparticle systems can be used to develop materials with multiple specific properties (e.g., for more efficient car batteries, targeted drug delivery, and solar cells)
- how new classes of stable, rapidly switchable magnetic structures could make it possible to store the entire Internet on a single hard drive.

A quantum recognition

Award for Hamburg experimental physicist



Prof. Andrea Cavalleri

"Our work explores at the interface between ultrafast optics and quantum materials research, especially the response of functional materials when these are exposed to very short bursts of electromagnetic radiation. We study the physics that is not found in textbooks, and we are trying to find new rules that control many particle responses in these conditions. The Stern Gerlach Medal has been awarded for these efforts and is a very rewarding recognition for me, for my team and for this field of research in general."

Andrea Cavalleri, a professor at the University of Hamburg and world-leading pioneer in ultrafast solid-state physics, is being honored with the Stern-Gerlach Medal from the German Physical Society (DPG) for his outstanding achievements in experimental physics.

Cavalleri is the founding director of the Max Planck Institute for the Structure and Dynamics of Matter and a senior researcher at the Cluster of Excellence CUI: Advanced Imaging of Matter. He also conducts research at the University of Oxford. The DPG is awarding the prize in recognition of his "pioneering work on the light-based control of quantum materials, through which he has made groundbreaking contributions to the control of emergent phenomena in solid-state physics."

Andrea Cavalleri's work has resulted in numerous breakthroughs in the light-controlled properties of quantum materials over the past two decades, such

as superconductivity, magnetism, ferroelectricity, and topological transport, as well as chirality and other exotic phases of matter. Cavalleri is also regarded as an innovator in the field of new experimental methods, contributing to the development of ultrafast X-ray sources used in condensed matter physics. His ground-breaking experiments have shown how targeted terahertz and femtosecond lasers can generate new quantum states—for example, light-induced superconductivity in cuprates. His award-winning work has revolutionized our understanding of nonequilibrium thermodynamics and opened up new perspectives on quantum matter.

The Stern-Gerlach Medal is the highest honor awarded by the DPG for outstanding achievements in experimental physics. Andrea Cavalleri is the third Max Planck director in a row to receive this prestigious award, following in the footsteps of Immanuel Bloch (2024) and Klaus Blaum (2025).

CUI bono

The European Research Council (ERC) is the premier research funding body for top-level research in the European Union. In 2025, researchers from the Cluster of Excellence CUI: Advanced Imaging of Matter secured several highly sought-after grants, including the Synergy Grant for the Imaging the Dynamics of Electrons with Attosecond and Ångström Resolution (IDEAA) project and the Starting Grant for Dr. César Cabrera Córdoba.



Ultrafast meets ultrashort

ERC Synergy Grant for the IDEAA project

The ERC Synergy Grant has been awarded to the IDEAA project. Synergy Grants are among the most prestigious grants offered within the European Union. They honor outstanding scientific achievement and exceptional interdisciplinary cooperation.

The team led by Dr. Saša Bajt, Prof. Francesca Calegari, Prof. Henry Chapman, and Prof. Nina Rohringer will receive €14 million over the next six years. Their goal is to develop an attosecond microscope to observe and record the movements of electrons in complex organic molecules. Attosecond science is currently the most advanced form of ultrafast imaging of matter. The movement of electrons becomes visible on the attosecond scale—one billionth of a billionth of a second. The challenge, however, lies in demonstrating this on the scale of an angstrom—that is, one ten-billionth of a meter, the size of a single atom. For this purpose, Saša Bajt is developing unique multilayer Laue lenses that make it possible to control the wavefront of the X-ray beam with the required precision. The team will use, among others, the European XFEL—the world’s largest X-ray laser—as the main site for their research.

Ultracold and superfluid

ERC Starting Grant

Dr. Cabrera Córdoba was successful in one of Europe’s most competitive funding programs: the ERC Starting Grant, which supports outstanding doctoral and early career researchers in establishing independent research groups and carrying out ambitious, high-risk projects with great potential. With a grant of €1.9 million, the experimental physicist plans to investigate the fundamental mechanisms of superconductivity.

His research focuses on ultracold atomic gases, in which the laws of quantum mechanics prevail. Under these conditions, novel quantum effects arise that can lead to the formation of entirely new states of matter. As quantum simulators, these gases make it possible to realistically replicate and precisely control the behavior of complex matter. In this way, they open up new avenues for researching highly interactive systems and phenomena, such as superconductivity, in which electricity flows without any loss of energy.

Dr. Cabrera Córdoba was a member of Prof. Henning Moritz’s research group at the Institute for Quantum Physics from 2022 to 2026 and also served as coordinator of the CUI Graduate School.



Dr. César Cabrera Córdoba

Cluster of Excellence Quantum Universe

In search of the cosmos' foundations



made a decisive contribution to our understanding of mass and gravity in quantum physics.



The spokespersons for QU

Prof. Erika Garutti
Prof. Timo Weigand
Prof. Géraldine Servant

In the Cluster of Excellence Quantum Universe (QU), we bring together the leading minds in particle physics, cosmology, and mathematics to investigate the fundamental principles of nature. The focus here is on the close partnership between the University of Hamburg and DESY, as well as our international network, for example cooperation with the LHC at CERN, the LISA space observatory, and the LOFAR radio telescope.

What sets QU apart is our interdisciplinary approach. We work across subjects and institutions, combining innovative theories, cutting-edge technologies, and powerful mathematical methods, from laboratory measurements to observations of the cosmos. Together, we explore some of the most profound

questions in science: What is dark matter? Why does matter dominate over antimatter? Why is gravity so weak, and how can it be described within the context of quantum physics?

We have already made significant scientific and technological progress during the first funding phase. This includes high-precision tests of the Standard Model, new insights into particles such as the Higgs boson, and advances in our understanding of the imbalance between matter and antimatter. We have developed groundbreaking detectors for the search for dark matter, including the MADMAX experiment, and made significant contributions to next-generation gravitational-wave observatories such as the Einstein Telescope. At the same time, new theoretical approaches have

In the next phase, QU will advance the integration of theory and high-precision experiments and further strengthen Hamburg's role as a global hub for top-level research in fundamental physics and mathematics. New detector technologies, combined with AI for data analysis, will open up unprecedented opportunities for us to explore potential new physics. Even small deviations from existing theories could lead to groundbreaking discoveries, whether through the detection of dark matter, the discovery of new particle interactions, or the observation of subtle effects in gravitational waves.

Beyond research, we have developed a robust support program for early career researchers while also creating a diverse and inclusive environment where bold ideas meet rigorous science.

[See the cluster's website](#)

[Video](#)

Research making waves

Tunable coherence laser interferometry for gravitational wave detection

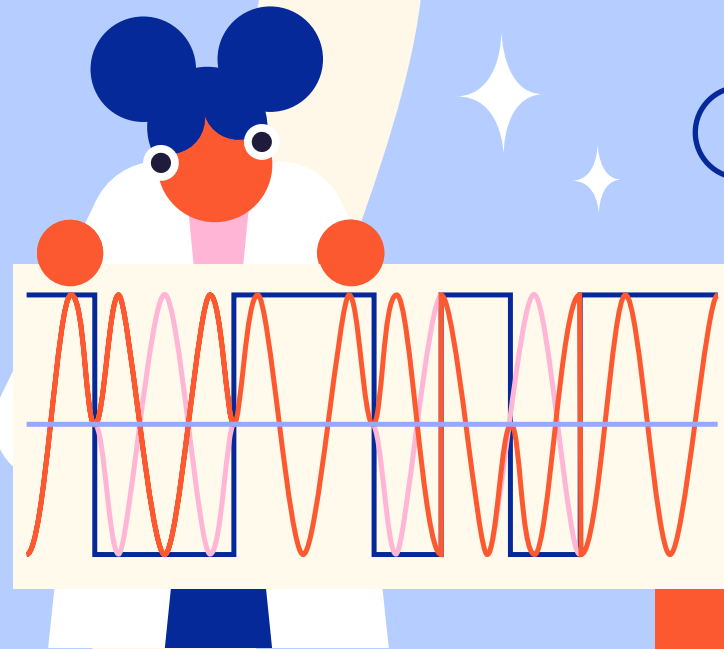
What happens when two black holes merge? The process generates gravitational waves that can be detected on Earth using special laser interferometers known as gravitational wave detectors. These detectors have kilometer-long arms equipped with optical components suspended in a vacuum to keep them isolated from external disturbances. In theory, laser light in these large systems mostly follows a predetermined path and reflects only off the mirrors. As small portions of the laser beam can be scattered, the light is also reflected off other objects, picking up disturbances in the process. If this light then finds its way back into the actual laser beam, it causes noise that masks the gravitational wave signals.

As part of a doctoral dissertation at the Institute of Experimental Physics and the Cluster of Excellence Quantum Universe, a new approach—known as tunable coherence—has now been experimentally demonstrated to counteract this disruptive effect. In this process, a pseudo-noise signal is intentionally superimposed on the light itself at a high frequency. As a result, the light can only produce interference if rays intersect after traveling specific path lengths. As scattered light typically follows a different path, it can be significantly suppressed. This breakthrough was published by the Hamburg team in the journal *Physical Review Letters* in collaboration with other international researchers.

In addition to this publication, the Hamburg team also published two further articles demonstrating the principle in the most important laser interferometer setups. The study showed, first, that other types of laser interferometers are also compatible with this technology, which means they can be combined with measurement methods designed to suppress quantum effects caused by radiation pressure. Second, it demonstrated that the technique also works with more complex setups and can be enhanced for scattered light with very small path length differences by using higher modulation rates.

This lays the groundwork for further research into and application of tunable coherence in gravitational-wave detectors and other fields of laser interferometry. “These aren’t just great results; the findings are already being incorporated into the planning of future observatories, such as the European Einstein Telescope,” confirms Prof. Oliver Gerberding, who heads the gravitational wave detection research group.

[Read the publication](#)



Seeing more in three dimensions

From logic to computer science to quantum field theory

There are two important operations in logic: “and” and “or.” From the statements A = “The University of Hamburg is a University of Excellence” and B = “The University of Hamburg is located on the Rhine,” we can form the statement “ A or B ” (written as $A \vee B$). This is true because at least one of the two statements is true. However, for the statement “ A and B ” (written as $A \wedge B$) to be true, both statements must be true at the same time.

These operations are subject to specific rules. A prominent example is the distributive law of classical logic: $A \wedge (B \vee C) = (A \wedge B) \vee (A \wedge C)$. If A , B , and C were numbers, $\wedge$ were multiplication, and $\vee$ were addition, this law would be familiar from school.

The distributive law poses a problem: The letter A appears twice on the right, but appears only once on the left. This phenomenon must be avoided in certain logical frameworks—for example, from the perspective of quantum theory, since quantum information cannot

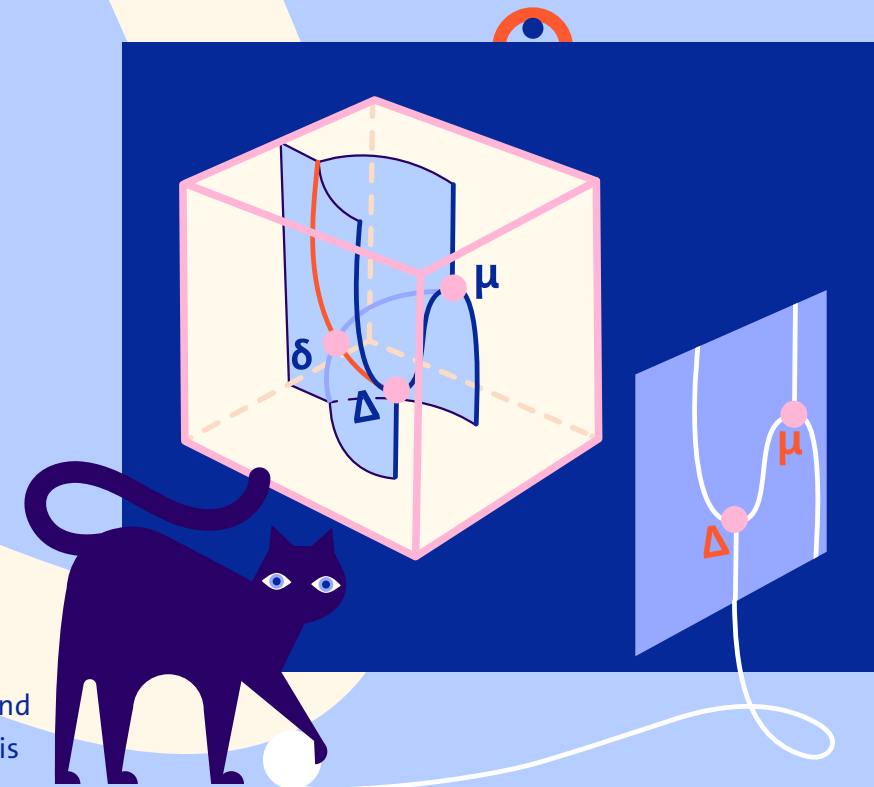
be copied. Therefore, we omit the A on the right-hand side. But that comes with a price, as the equal sign is replaced by an arrow, and the law takes on a direction: $A \wedge (B \vee C) \rightarrow (A \wedge B) \vee C$. Now, one can only infer the truth of the right-hand side from the truth of the left-hand side, but not the other way around.

Precisely these kinds of structures were discovered in Hamburg during research into the symmetries of two-dimensional quantum field theories—theories that also play a central role in the development of string theories. The goal is to construct more rich algebraic structures within this framework, such as so-called Frobenius algebras, which describe boundary fields in quantum field theories. In simpler cases, this is done by representing mathematical expressions as graphs in the plane. But

the directed arrows make such a two-dimensional calculus impossible here.

For this reason, a three-dimensional calculus was developed in which the directed arrows can be seen in the third dimension. Using this approach, a number of statements were proven within a much broader framework. This work has thus laid the groundwork for a mathematical understanding of larger classes of two-dimensional quantum field theories.

[Read the publication](#)



Tiny and fleeting

Yet suddenly visible

Artistic representation of a connection between a top quark and its antiparticle

Describable, yet not detectable—that was long the assumption about toponium, the bound state formed by a top quark and its antiparticle. However, a discovery by the research group led by Dr. Alexander Grohsjean and Prof. Dr. Christian Schwanenberger, researchers at the University of Hamburg and DESY, now calls this long-standing view into question.

Since top quarks are extremely heavy and decay almost instantly, such a bound state was long considered experimentally inaccessible at the Large Hadron Collider (LHC). However, as part of the CMS exper-

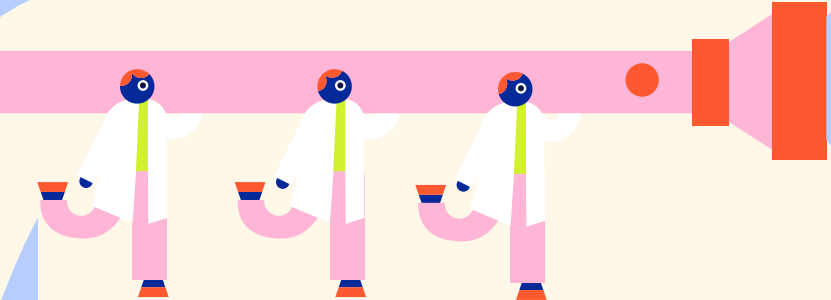
iment at the LHC at the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), the researchers observed an unexpected signal suggesting the existence of a short-lived top-antitop system.

In very rare collisions, top-antitop pairs are produced with unusually low relative motion, allowing them to bind for a brief moment before decaying. The results have since been independently confirmed by the ATLAS experiment.

The findings underscore the high precision of modern particle physics. Using additional datasets, the researchers now intend to study this phenomenon in detail. Toponium could prove to be a valuable tool for studying the strong interaction offering a new window into the internal structure of matter and potentially constituting the smallest composite particle ever observed.

Find out more

Seeing through walls with light



ALPS II bears no relation to the mountain range, but rather is a complex optical system and chain of 24 recycled superconducting magnets located in the tunnel of the former HERA accelerator beneath Volkspark in Hamburg. After its first successful operation in 2024, its expansion is now in full swing. In 2027, another light-through-the-wall science run is scheduled, using two high-precision optical resonators, each 124 meters long. The experimental setup may lead axions and similar particles to “give themselves away” by transporting light through a wall that is normally opaque.

At the same time, preparations are underway for the first-ever measurement of the double refraction of the magnetic vacuum, a phenomenon predicted over 90 years ago. This extremely weak effect, which resembles the properties of certain crystals, is now within measurable reach thanks to the unique ALPS II infrastructure and newly developed precision interferometry. Here, too, discrepancies between theoretical predictions and experimental results could point to something as yet unknown—“new physics,” so to speak.

Cluster of Excellence Understanding Written Artefacts

The next chapter: Rethinking research on written artefacts



**Cluster
spokesperson
Prof. Konrad
Hirschler**



[Visit the UWA website](#)

The first funding phase of the Cluster of Excellence Understanding Written Artefacts (UWA) came to an end in 2025, during which we were able to present many key findings from our research. In 2025 alone, six new volumes were published in our series *Studies in Manuscript Cultures*, reflecting our researchers' collaborative work, in some cases over several years. This included the first history of the archiving of written artefacts from ancient Mesopotamia to the present from the perspective of materiality, the conceptualization of the practice of note-taking in writing cultures from Japan to West Africa, and the analysis of Tibetan tsakali maps, which to date have barely been researched outside the humanities. We have conducted an in-depth study of these objects in our artefact and computer science labs to gain a comprehensive understanding of their ritual significance and materiality. In the second funding phase, our

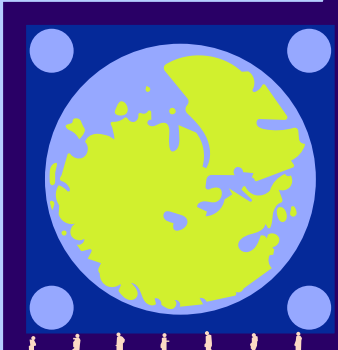
cluster will continue to focus on the global history of handwriting across all cultures and eras.

We are a unique research alliance comprising some 40 disciplines, many of which previously had little to do with written artefacts. This has opened up entirely new horizons in research. Over the past seven years, we have created the structures needed to realize our interdisciplinary research goals. And we have established common working methods and approaches that enable us to conduct interdisciplinary research on written artefacts in the first place. We intend to use this foundation to further develop UWA and to explore new areas of research, such as the interdependence between handwriting and its mechanical reproduction (printing) from a global perspective.

It is also our responsibility to critically reflect on our own practices. We are dealing not just with any objects but rather with common cultural goods. This automatically raises questions about how best to handle objects that are damaged or of unknown provenance, how to handle our colonial legacy, or how to do research in conflict regions. At the same time, digitalization is fundamentally changing our access to written artefacts and, consequently, our research. As a cluster, we are in the position and have the responsibility to tackle these challenges and develop best practices for our disciplines.

The Mona Lisa of world maps

In Venice with the Mobile Lab



In the 15th century, the Italian cartographer Fra Mauro created one of the most famous world maps of all time. Spanning over two meters of fine parchment, it brings together hundreds of illustrations and more than 3,000 explanatory texts. The most detailed world map of its time, it broke with established conventions and marked the beginning of a new era in cartog-

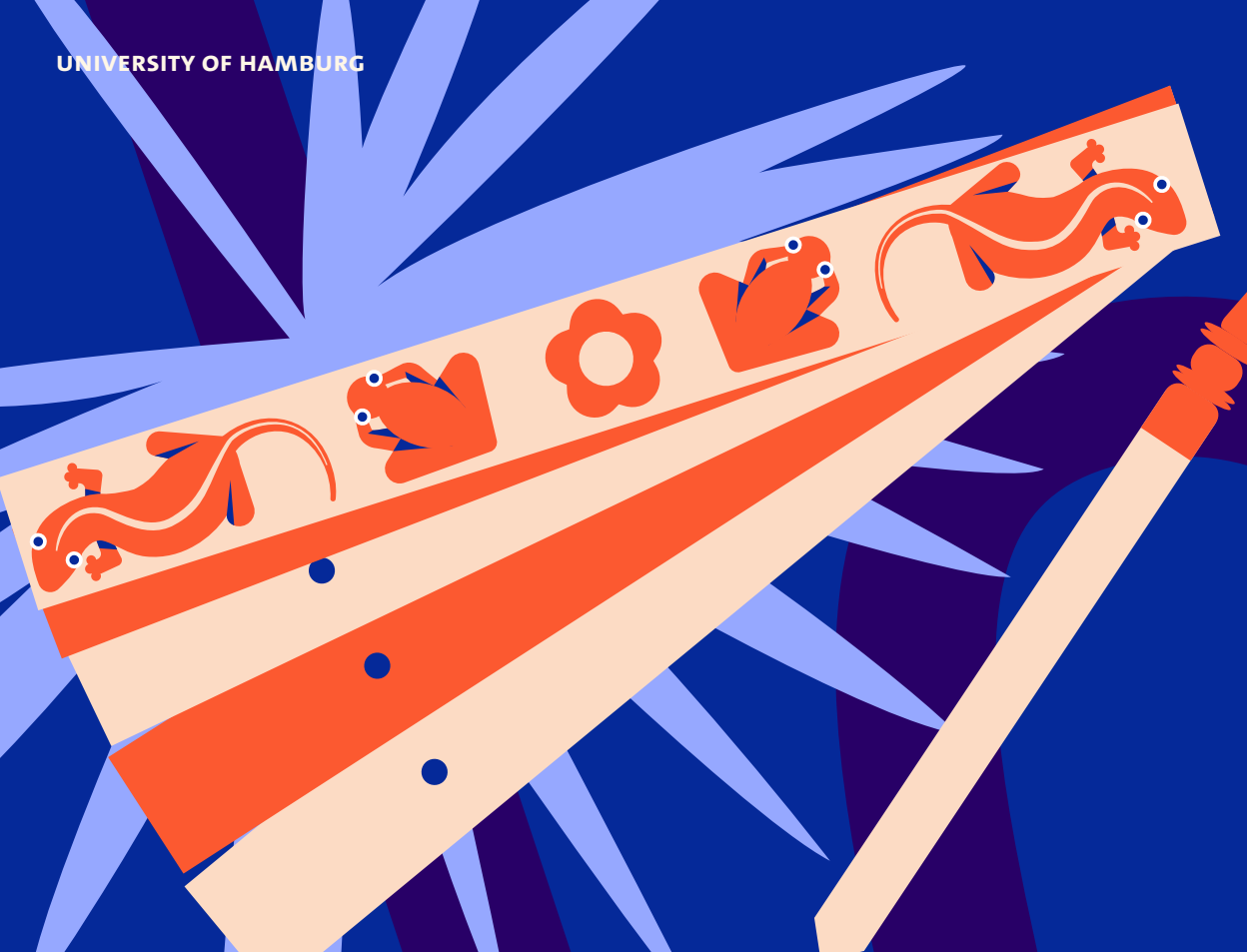
raphy. Fra Mauro avoided conventional religious imagery, organized the world geographically rather than theologically, and chose a southward orientation, which was virtually unheard of in Europe at the time. Fra Mauro did not work alone. Over the course of several years, numerous cartographers, artists, and writers contributed to this project, drawing on a wide variety of sources, including maps, manuscripts, and oral travel accounts. Through repeated revisions and additions, the map continued to evolve in tandem with contemporary geographical knowledge. The hidden traces of these earlier revisions in particular make the map so fascinating for today's researchers.

This is precisely where the University of Hamburg's Cluster of Excellence Understanding Written Artefacts (UWA) comes in. The researchers are studying how the map was created, modified, and expanded over the years. They want to reconstruct when Fra Mauro and his team had access to certain information, how they interpreted it, and what materials they used. But this data is hidden. You have to look beneath the surface of the map and analyze layers that have been painted or written over—a task that requires innovative analytical techniques. However, the original is

extremely fragile and cannot be transported. This is where the UWA Mobile Lab proves useful: Greg Nehring, Sebastian Bosch, and Claudia Colini from the Mobile Lab, along with art historian Hanna Wimmer and Chet van Duzer from the Lazarus Project at the University of Rochester, traveled to Venice in January 2025 to analyze the pigments and material layers of the map on-site at the Biblioteca Marciana using X-ray fluorescence and Raman spectroscopy—a process that is mobile but does not damage the objects under investigation. This combination of humanities-based questions and scientific methods makes research within UWA particularly innovative and gives it international visibility.

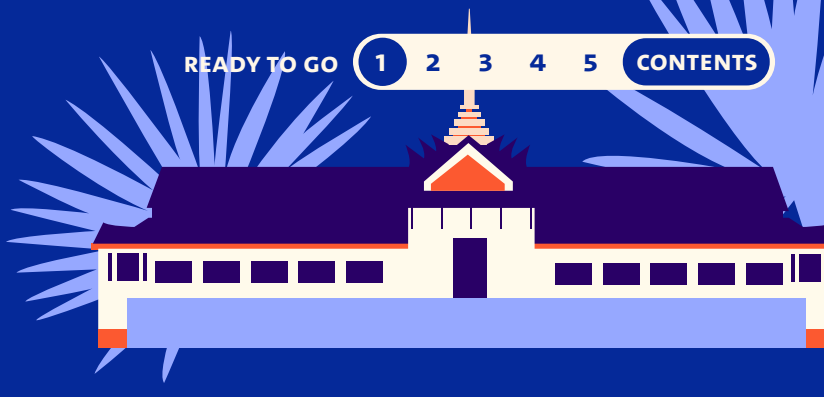
The trip to Venice and the team's work were documented in an engaging short by Aha! Film. It features research conducted in the historical library, interviews with those involved, and rare glimpses into the mobile research expedition—including the transport of the instruments by boat through the city's canals. The film is available on the UWA and

Watch the video

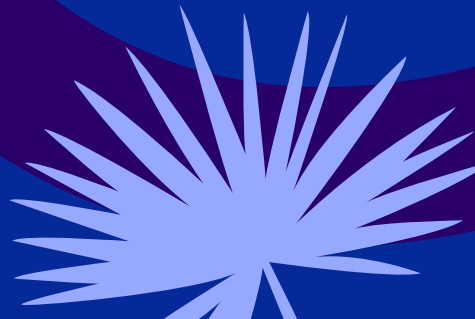


In search of Laotian written culture

The forests and villages around Luang Prabang in Laos are one of the few regions in the world where a centuries-old manuscript tradition remains alive to this day. Despite its importance, Laotian book production is virtually unknown in the West. Thousands of manuscripts written on palm leaves and traditional handmade paper are preserved in monasteries and private collections throughout Laos. Monks and lay scribes have preserved and continuously passed down ancient techniques of writing and book production, making today's practitioners part of a centuries-old tradition. However, we know very little about exactly how these valuable documents were and are produced. There is little documentation on the specific techniques.

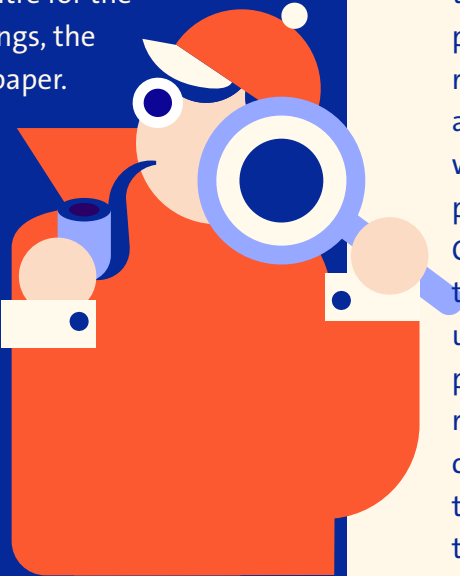


Even here, globalization is leading to the gradual disappearance of traditional techniques and production methods, which are in danger of dying out. Aiming to preserve knowledge of these traditions, Agnieszka Helman-Wazny and Volker Grabowsky have been conducting field research in the rural areas of northern Laos for many years. They have recorded the voices and stories of experienced practitioners. With the film *A Fading Tradition: The Production of Manuscripts in Laos*, they have created a compelling documentary about this vanishing culture.

[Watch the video](#)

The fabric of forgery

Is his dissertation a forgery? Matthias Graw, head of the Institute of Forensic Medicine at LMU Munich, faced this accusation in the fall of 2022. According to independent expert reports by well-known “plagiarism hunters,” Graw’s dissertation, submitted to the University of Hamburg in 1987, is said to have been almost entirely plagiarized from an anthology of papers from a conference in Romania that was published in 1982. The ombuds office, which provides advice on good academic practice, and the office of the dean of the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Hamburg were tasked with investigating the case and brought in the Artefact Lab at the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC). Among other things, the researchers analyzed the chemical composition of the paper. They discovered synthetic adhesives that were not used in the former Eastern Bloc until after 1989—long after the conference paper was supposedly printed. As a result, the allegations of plagiarism against Graw collapsed. The author of the book, which was apparently produced at great expense as an act of revenge, was sentenced to two and a half years in prison on charges including defamation and fraud.



A window into the past

The digital rebirth of a guestbook

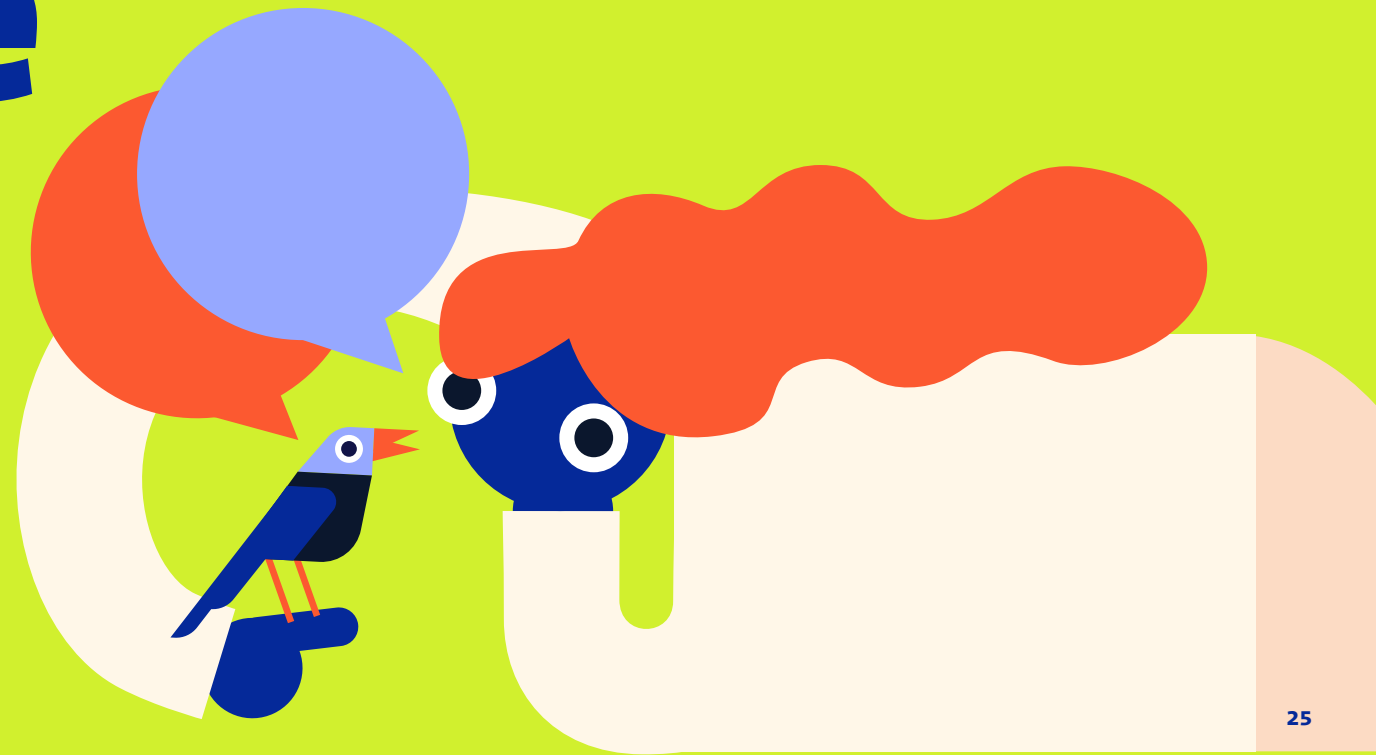
Many researchers who work with written artefacts today do not usually have access to the original objects but rather digital reproductions. How does this situation affect research? What do we lose without direct access to an actual physical object? And what do we gain from these new digital possibilities? Sebastian Schirrmeister at the Cluster of Excellence Understanding Written Artefacts is exploring these questions using a unique written artefact as an example: Miryam and Moshe Ya’akov Ben-Gavriël’s guestbook. Their home was a hub of cultural life in Jerusalem in the mid-twentieth century. Some 600 intellectuals, writers, and artists—including Arnold Zweig,

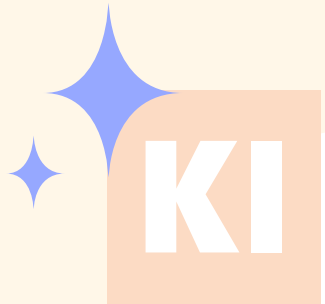


Gabriele Tergit, and Oskar Kokoschka—frequented the place, leaving behind some 1,200 entries that bear witness to a turbulent era and many personal stories. An elaborate visual presentation of this book has been created in collaboration with the Hub of Computing and Data Science. A wide range of search and filter functions enable inspiring discoveries—an example of what digitalization can achieve for research when it is carefully designed.

[View the guestbook](#)

University of Hamburg in Dialogue





KI



Recalibrating studies and teaching

Sometimes you need to recalibrate, so the University of Hamburg updated its guiding principles for studying and teaching in 2025. We refined our existing principles and shifted focus to account for new demands in society, academia, and university policy. Our core guiding principles remain education through scholarship, academic freedom, and the integration of research and teaching. These will now be applied in connection with questions about the future of studying and teaching processes, participation, and a university’s social responsibility.

Dr. Bernd Struß heads the office for academic affairs for the Faculty of Humanities and was a member of the working group for university teaching guidelines.



Dr. Bernd Struß



“With its new guiding principles, the University of Hamburg has established a compelling framework for the strategic development of its degree programs, thereby underscoring that ‘excellence’ means much more than the amount of external funding secured. I find it particularly important that both students and faculty at the University of Hamburg develop into responsible and reflective members of a diverse, equitable, and therefore democratic urban community.”

Dr. Eileen Lübcke works as a research associate at the Hamburg Center for University Teaching and Learning (HUL), where she coordinates the Learning through Research focus area. She was also a member of the working group for university teaching guidelines.



Dr. Eileen Lübcke

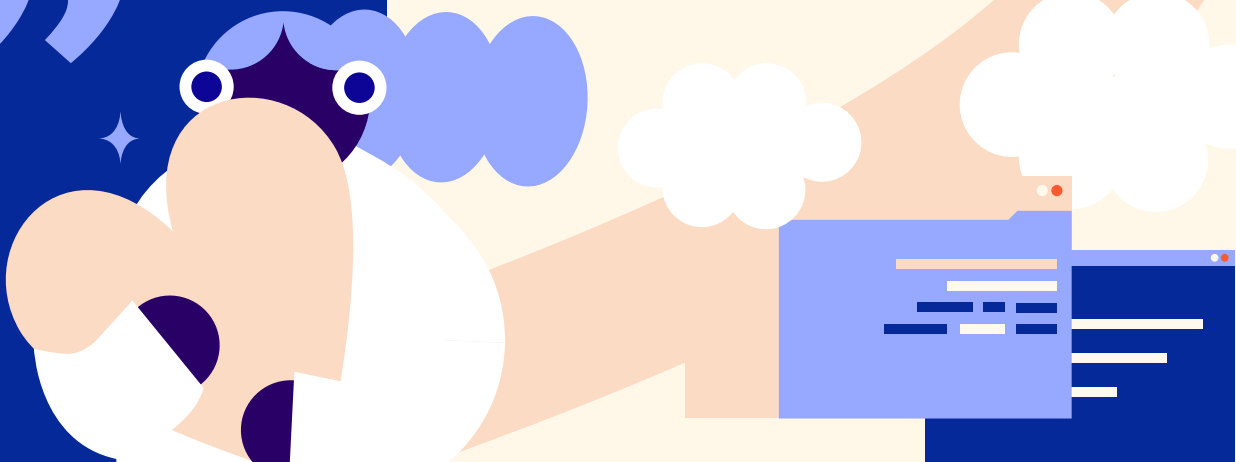
“The new guiding principles emphasize important aspects of teaching and study, such as the student-as-partner approach and the opening up of the university to society at large without ignoring the central pillar of education through scholarship.”

Our previous guidelines for university teaching date back to 2014. Since then, there have been a few significant developments in studying and teaching. These include, in particular, interdisciplinarity, diversity, digitalization and artificial intelligence, sustainability, student participation, equitable access to education, and knowledge exchange. These perspectives also entail greater awareness of respect, a sense of belonging, and the wellbeing of all students and faculty. It is especially important to see these issues as part of a holistic understanding of the university.

The revised guidelines also change the prospects for the further development of studies and teaching. While the guidelines of 2014 were created at a time when higher education policy was very concerned with developing formal quality assurance procedures, the revised guidelines focus more strongly on high-quality and participatory studies and teaching. The guidelines provide

orientation for setting strategic goals, developing quality, taking responsibility in studies and teaching, and seeing these aspects as part of a whole.

Initiated by the vice president for studies and teaching, a working group was formed to develop our principles further, with participation from all faculties and all University constituencies. The draft was discussed by various University committees (the chamber for studies and teaching, the Committee for Teaching and Studies, and the Executive University Board) and passed by the Academic Senate on 8 May 2025. But that’s not the end of the process: the new guidelines form a viable basis for the ongoing participatory strategic process for studies and teaching for 2035. The goals set forth in the new guiding principles will be further refined and incorporated into the development of studies and teaching in cooperation with the faculties and central institutions.



Read the guiding principles

ExStra-strong coffee and excellent information



important question—and the answer to it is as diverse as the University itself. This is because the Excellence Strategy of the Federal and State Governments (ExStra) has an impact on many levels and in a wide variety of fields. The evaluation of our excellence status focused on exactly that. To qualify for continued funding, we needed to demonstrate the extent to which the objectives of the first funding phase had been achieved and what impacts had been realized on-site. In this context, members of the University were invited to a series of events to explore the content of ExStra in greater detail.

The Into the Future: Live Session on the University of Hamburg in the Excellence Strategy event took place on 1 April 2025 and offered all University members the

opportunity to learn—either in person or via live stream—about the University’s current status and what the funding has already made possible. In addition to representatives from research, academic studies, teaching, and internationalization, participants from the fields of knowledge exchange, career development, and diversity also clearly illustrated how ExStra affects their areas of work.

ExStra also had its own booth at the campus festival on 25 June 2025. In a fun digital quiz, over 200 students and staff took the opportunity to test their knowledge and win an “ExStra-strong” coffee from the Coffee-Bike. An information banner and short videos on excellence in studies and teaching conveyed key features of ExStra and helped participants answer the quiz questions. A football table also encouraged people to stick around and strike up a conversation.



At the same time, selected groups of people were making intensive preparations for the on-site visit by the external evaluators in October 2025. Representatives from academia, administration, and key University departments used tailored formats to discuss key aspects of the evaluation process and jointly agree on the next steps.

This increased focus on dialogue helped foster a sense that ExStra is a collaborative project and, through targeted communication, laid the groundwork for jointly exploring new avenues for the University’s future development.

“I have met many people at our University who are thrilled about our excellence status. But people frequently ask, ‘What does this have to do with me?’” reported President Prof. Dr. Hauke Heekeren at the start of the Excellence for the Future event. An

Pilot university for sustainability

German Rectors' Conference's Sustainability at Universities audit

Together with three other universities, the University of Hamburg participated in the Sustainability at Universities audit conducted by the German Rectors' Conference (HRK). As a pilot institution, it has systematically analyzed its strengths, challenges, and potential for development in the area of sustainability transformation and made this information transparent to other higher education institutions.

At the heart of the process was a phase of thorough self-reflection, during which Chief Sustainability Officer Prof. Dr. Laura Marie Edinger-Schons, the Sustainability Office, and a University-wide project group analyzed the current state of sustainability activities and structures at the University of Hamburg. This analysis was explored in

discussions and workshops during the audit visit of 2–4 April 2025. In addition to the HRK team and external auditors, members of the Executive University Board, heads of departments, administrative staff, researchers, and students were also involved. This dialogue-based process resulted in a detailed report containing specific strategic and operational recommendations for advancing the sustainability transformation.

Strengths, areas for improvement, and recommendations for action were identified across each of the five performance dimensions: governance, research, student affairs and teaching, knowledge exchange, and administration and operations. The focus is on several key questions: How can

governance structures be designed to be effective in the long term and less dependent on specific individuals? How can we better foster, network, and raise the profile of sustainability research? How can sustainability be systematically integrated into curricula to expand the roles of students and faculty? How can knowledge exchange be more strategically linked to sustainable development? How can sustainability be effectively integrated into administrative processes?

The findings will be translated into an implementation road map in 2026. The audit thus serves as a key foundation for the next phase of the University of Hamburg's sustainability transformation.



Double materiality assessment

Since late 2023, the University of Hamburg has been aligning itself with the requirements of the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) and is currently preparing a voluntary sustainability report based on the European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS). A key component is a materiality assessment conducted in accordance with the double materiality approach. This assessment examines both the impact of University activities on people and the environment and the financial implications of sustainability-related risks and opportunities for the University. The materiality assessment was successfully completed in 2025.

The power of networks

What happens when university hospitals across the country pool their data, biological samples, and expertise? The Network of University Medicine (NUM) has developed infrastructure that reimagines clinical research, leading to findings more quickly. What began as a response to the pandemic is now evolving into a central platform for medicine.

Blanche Schwappach-Pignataro is the dean of the Faculty of Medicine at the University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf (UKE) and supports the NUM's work from the perspective of a university campus. In this interview, Schwappach-Pignataro explains how the NUM is transforming clinical research and what opportunities it holds for science and patient care.



Prof. Blanche Schwappach-Pignataro

1 Modern medicine increasingly relies on collaboration and large amounts of data. Why is it becoming more and more important to think about clinical research beyond individual locations?

Even the largest university campuses in Germany are relatively small compared to the major players in other countries. So this means making an impact through cooperation. Other countries, such as the United Kingdom, have already done this in similar projects. The UK Biobank is a highly successful network that has facilitated clinical research on a wide range of medical issues, thereby transforming standards of treatment and prevention. When it comes to the development of new drugs and clinical trials, many pharmaceutical companies view Germany as a challenging partner. At the same time, they highlight the high quality of data from university studies. Through the NUM, interested partners worldwide can reach all of the locations collectively. The standards developed within the NUM are designed to expedite the signing of contracts and the launch of the respective clinical trials.

2 The NUM was established during the COVID-19 pandemic. How has this initiative developed since?

The NUM continues to focus on infectious disease medicine, clinical trials, and the exchange of best practices. However, the infrastructure and standards developed there can be effectively applied to other medical topics and diseases. This is why, in 2024, the NUM Study Network was launched, initially focusing on infections. Currently, two additional specialist networks (stroke and intensive care medicine) are beginning their work in this context. This means the network has expanded and offers, above all, infrastructure for clinical researchers. The NUM takes great care to avoid duplicating structures. For this reason, areas such as cardiovascular research or oncology focus more on coordinating efforts with other stakeholders, such as the German Centers for Health Research and the National Center for Tumor Diseases. The NUM does not conduct basic research on the normal functions of the body or the mechanisms of disease.

3

As both a molecular biologist and dean, you are familiar with the NUM. When did you personally realize that this network is actually changing the way research is organized in Germany?

Advances in medicine depend on the entire so-called translational cycle: questions arising from practice in diagnosis and treatment lead to basic research projects, which often identify target structures for therapeutic approaches. Further developing such approaches requires applied research projects first, followed by clinical research. The NUM facilitates the coordinated participation of all university campuses and other associated partners in large-scale clinical research projects. This harmonizes the translation cycle regardless of the focus and capacities of individual locations, thereby speeding it up. New talent can find its way and network in a large collaborative context.

4

A key component of the NUM is shared platforms for medical data and biological samples. What new opportunities does this create for researchers?

There are ever-increasing amounts of data. This is also true in medicine. One of the NUM's goals is to make routine health care data available that is both efficient and conducive to innovation, thus enabling researchers to use it to address questions in medicine. The same applies to the provision of quality-assured biological samples. Access to data and samples is made easier thanks to standardization and user-friendly processes. Clinical researchers can operate as part of a national—and eventually European—community, reaping all the benefits of mutual exchange and the power of pooled data.

5

What does the network actually mean for the work of researchers at the UKE, for example, in terms of collaboration, studies, or access to data?

In certain areas, we can conceive of more ambitious projects. There's no need to keep reinventing the wheel. Some projects are eligible for NUM funding—for example, the National Autopsy Network (NATON) or the research networks on infectious diseases, stroke, and intensive care medicine.

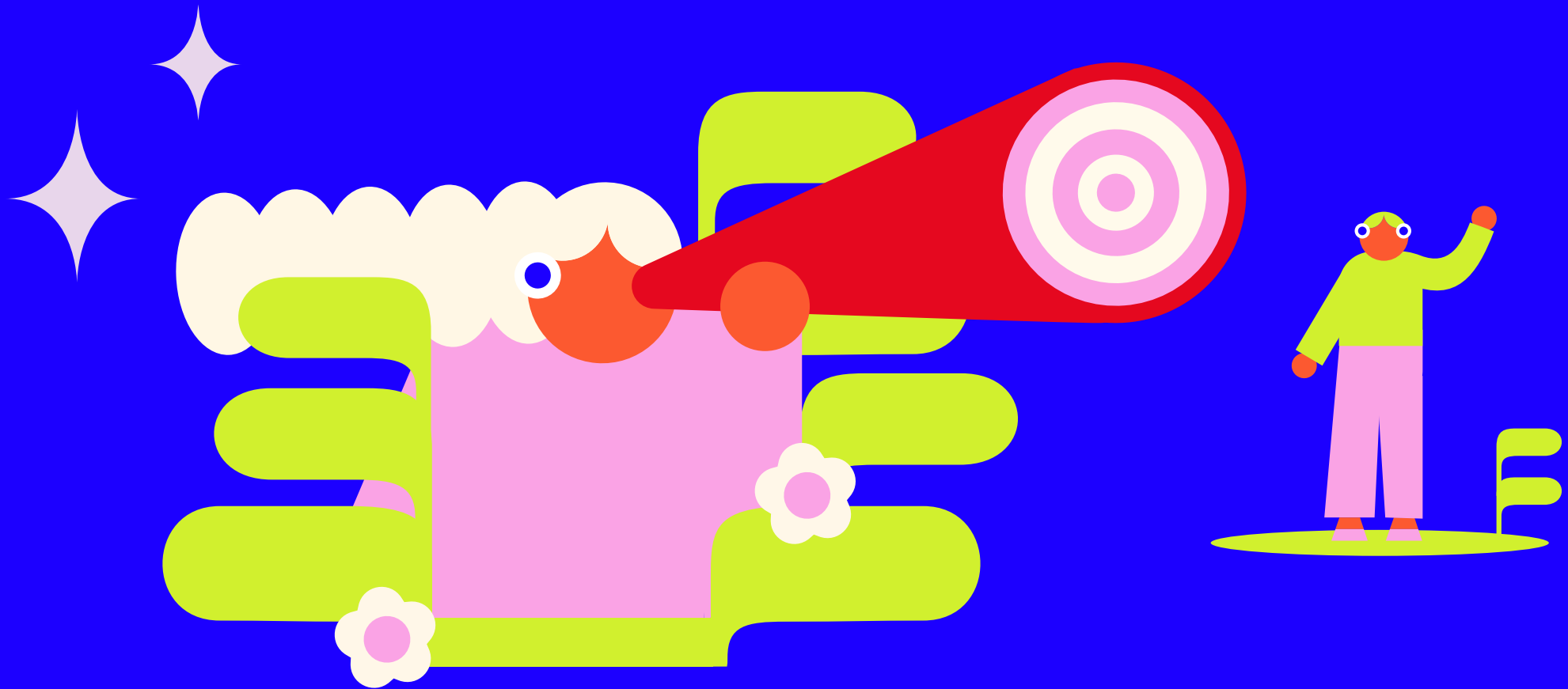
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Looking a few years ahead, how would you know that the NUM has reached its full potential?

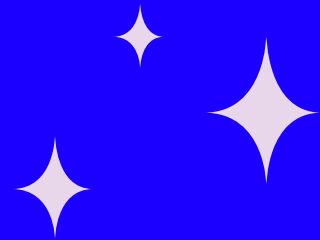
The NUM infrastructure will become an integral part of the medicine research landscape in Germany and Europe. The connection to the European Health Data Space has been successfully established. Germany has significantly improved its standing in the field of clinical trials, and NUM manages many large-scale phase II and phase III trials that lead to new therapies backed by robust evidence.



Eye on the Goal



Our focus is on change. By breaking up well-worn structures, we are creating new spaces for research, teaching, and collaboration, both figuratively and literally. That means moving beyond boundaries and thinking globally, without losing our bearings. We are keeping our **eye on the goal**.



Contents

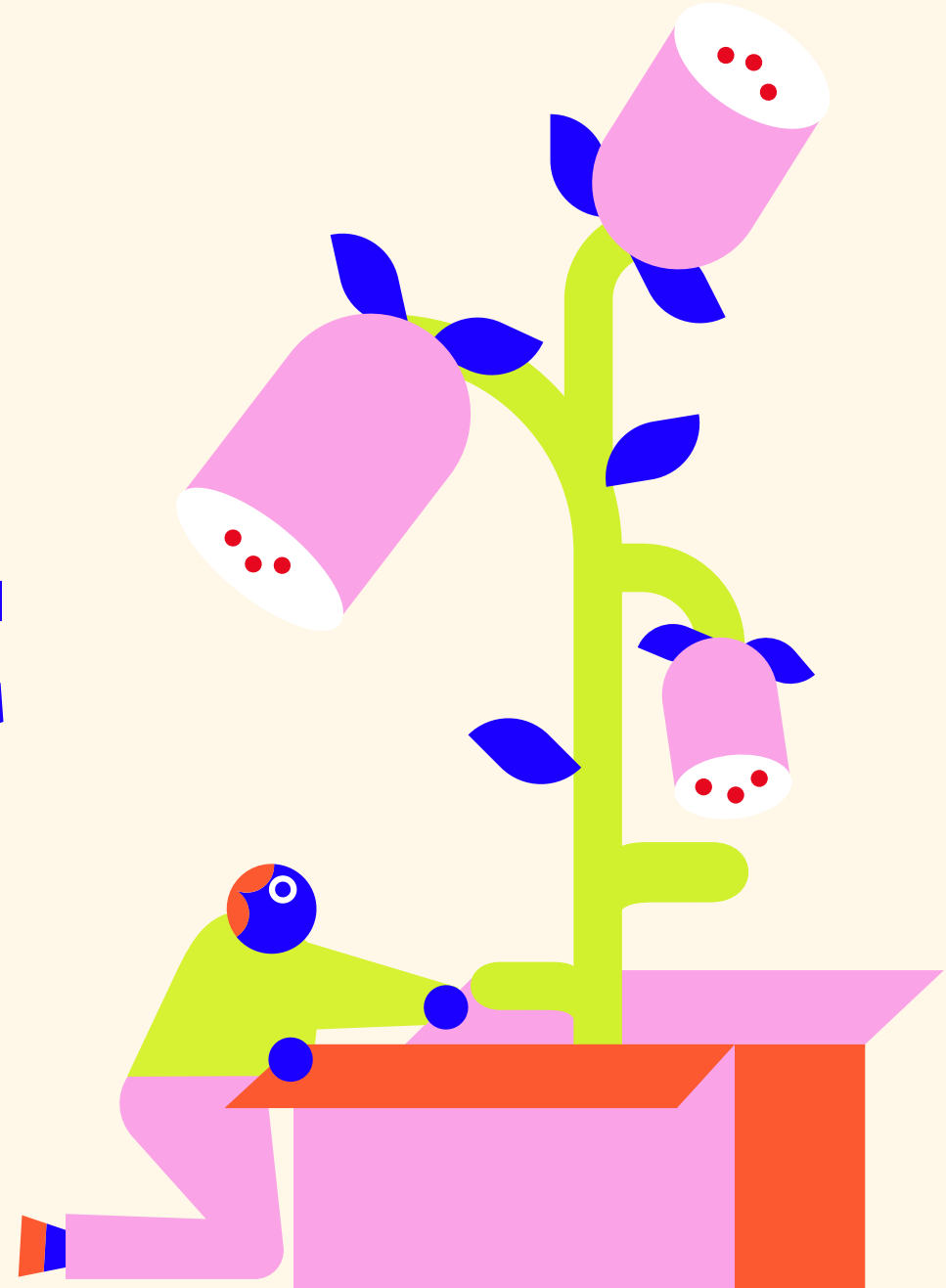
Building Room for
Great Things

Driving Progress

Breaking Down Barriers

University of Hamburg
in Dialogue

Building Room for Great Things





**Eva
Liesberg**

Rethinking the campus

Together with the city

How can a campus become a more open, vibrant, and integral part of the city? The University of Hamburg is addressing this issue at its Von-Melle-Park and Bundesstraße locations. The goal is to carefully develop the premises and make them better connected with the surrounding neighborhoods. Ideas were shared in a collaborative workshop process involving various stakeholders. We talk about this with Eva Liesberg, head of Section 86: Campus Development.

1

What is the central idea behind the further development of these campus locations?

With the development of Science City Hamburg Bahrenfeld, the University is undergoing a transformation that offers an opportunity to rethink the Eimsbüttel campus as well. It is based on a strategy that links sustainability, pluralistic scholarship, and social responsibility. The goal is to strengthen the University's role as an inclusive part of the city and to help address global challenges such as climate change and digitalization. Research and innovation should become more visible and tangible through knowledge exchange, community engagement, and the promotion of

democracy in a neighborhood jointly developed by the city and the University.

At the same time, important urban planning projects—such as the development of major thoroughfares, the construction of the U5 underground line, and the reconstruction of the Bornplatz Synagogue—have a direct impact on the campus premises. We thus see the further development of the Eimsbüttel campus as a way to connect all of these projects.

2 The concepts were developed in a workshop. How did this differ from traditional planning?

In traditional planning processes, such as architectural competitions, design firms are given a brief at the outset and work on it largely without the opportunity to consult with others. Competition participants are generally not aware of the other entries. The anonymized entries are reviewed by a jury, which selects a winner. During the workshop, four planning teams worked on their assignments

in the same room for three days and were able to consult regularly with the district officials, the relevant municipal authorities, and the University. In the end, changes were suggested and incorporated into the final results. No winner was selected. The results serve as inspiration and a foundation for further development.

3 Many different stakeholders were involved. How can so many different perspectives be brought together meaningfully?

In addition to the commissioning parties—the Eimsbüttel district; the Ministries of Urban Development and Housing and of Science, Research and Equality; and the University of Hamburg—other institutions were involved, including the Ministries of Culture and Media, of Environment, Climate, Energy and Agriculture, of Transport and Mobility Transition, of Economy and Innovation; district administrations; the Hamburger Hochbahn AG; Grindel e.V.; the Jewish Community; the SUB; Studierendenwerk Hamburg; AStA; University Sports; various researchers; and other interest groups.

For years, there has been close cooperation with the relevant stakeholders on the development of the Eimsbüttel campus. Through numerous rounds of consultation, we were able to clarify needs, build trust, and foster a better understanding of different perspectives. Thanks to this preliminary work, constructive solutions to contentious issues were usually found during the workshop process itself. It also helped that everyone knew that the ideas developed in the workshop could be flexible enough to accommodate changes in the upcoming decades.

4 What specific changes did this open exchange bring about in terms of the results or the approach?

We established a common foundation and vision that allows us to avoid having to revisit every issue from the beginning; instead we can work with the other stakeholders to gradually develop the individual projects. The cross-institutional consensus on campus development provides hope that the coordination processes for future projects will become more streamlined, since everyone was involved before the project began and contributed to setting the objectives. At the same time, the vision connects the individual projects. Synergies can be harnessed to create a cohesive overall picture.

5 Looking ahead, what tangible changes can students and the city expect in the future?

Students will enjoy a more vibrant, diverse, and sustainable campus area with more green spaces and a better quality of life. This also includes adjacent urban spaces such as the Grindelallee thoroughfare, which will be narrowed to enlarge the pedestrian areas and greenery thanks to the construction of the U5 underground line. The University will gain greater visibility in the urban landscape, and—as part of the twin transformation—the Bundesstraße campus will bridge the gap between the bustling Grindel and Schanzen districts in the long term by ensuring that the area also hosts student housing, cultural activities, cuisine, start-ups, and academia-related companies.

Bitten by the research bug

New research building for inflammation, infection, and immunity research at the UKE

Researchers at UKE now have access to a new building that provides them with ideal conditions for their work. It was constructed to house the research groups and consortia of the UKE’s core research area at the Center for Inflammation, Infection, and Immunity (C3i)—also a core research area at the University of Hamburg.

The building is divided into two sections: Research Campus II (CFII) and the Hamburg Center for Translational Immunology (HCTI). Both sections of the building have a clearly defined research focus on inflammation, infection, and immunology. Direct connections under a single roof should facilitate cooperation between basic and clinical research for a multidisciplinary research approach.



The HCTI focuses on bridging the gap between basic immunological research and clinical application. It brings together internationally recognized research groups working on various organ systems to systematically and comprehensively map and compare immune-tolerant and inflammatory immune responses. The goal of this multidisciplinary approach is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the immunopathogenesis of selected diseases and to develop innovative forms of treatment.

CFII’s facilities and excellent infrastructure provide working groups within the C3i with the ideal conditions for outstanding collaborative research in the field of infectious diseases and for the exchange of ideas.

There are approximately 120 office spaces and 190 laboratory workstations at CFII as well as approximately 120 office spaces and 170 laboratory workstations at the HCTI, which are found in the basement and on the ground and upper four floors. Open seminar and event spaces on the ground floor and meeting rooms and lounge areas on the upper floors foster academic exchange among staff members.

The new research building is home to the first safety level 3 laboratory on the UKE campus—a high-containment facility designed for handling dangerous pathogens. In addition, six collaborative research centers (CRCs) and transregional collaborative research centers (TRRs) will be housed in the new building:



- CRC 1192: Immune-Mediated Glomerular Diseases
- CRC 1328: Adenine Nucleotides in Immunity and Inflammation
- CRC 1700: Immune Regulation in the Liver
- CRC 1713: Maternal Immune Activation
- TRR 333: Brown and Beige Fat
- TRR 422: PodoSigN—Podocyte Signaling Network

[Visit the HCTI website](#)

Making room for innovative teaching



One of the many ways in which funds for promoting excellence are channeled into teaching is through the Fund for Innovative Teaching (FIL). The motto of the first round of proposals for 2025/26 was “Innovative spaces for innovative teaching.” This enables the University of Excellence to support projects led by faculty members who—together with students—develop creative, innovative, and exemplary spaces for teaching, learning, and interaction within the faculties.

These spatial concepts can be physical, virtual, or hybrid in nature and are intended to facilitate the implementation of new participatory and flexible teaching and learning formats. A maximum grant of €35,000 is available for each project.

FIL’s first call for proposals, developed in response to feedback from the 2023 Campus Survey, closed on 30 April 2025 and generated significant interest across all faculties. A total of 21 applications were submitted, significantly exceeding the originally planned funding allocation of €190,000. The selection committee, which comprised members from faculties and student groups and representatives from the University administration and the Hamburg Center for University Teaching and Learning, met on 14 May and 11 June 2025 to discuss the applications. Ultimately, seven projects were selected for funding, distinguished by their interdisciplinary scope and significance for the entire University.

[Visit the FIL website](#)

Example

Hybrid innovation space for immersive teaching

The Faculty of Psychology and Human Movement—in collaboration with the Faculty of Mathematics, Informatics and Natural Sciences—is supporting the development of a hybrid classroom for immersive teaching using virtual reality headsets. A pilot seminar was held during Winter Semester 2025/26 to facilitate hands-on learning using complex 3D objects, reduce travel time between

different campus locations, and create sustainable alternatives to traditional in-person or distance learning. The result is a forward-looking spatial solution that seamlessly integrates elements of physical presence and virtual reality.

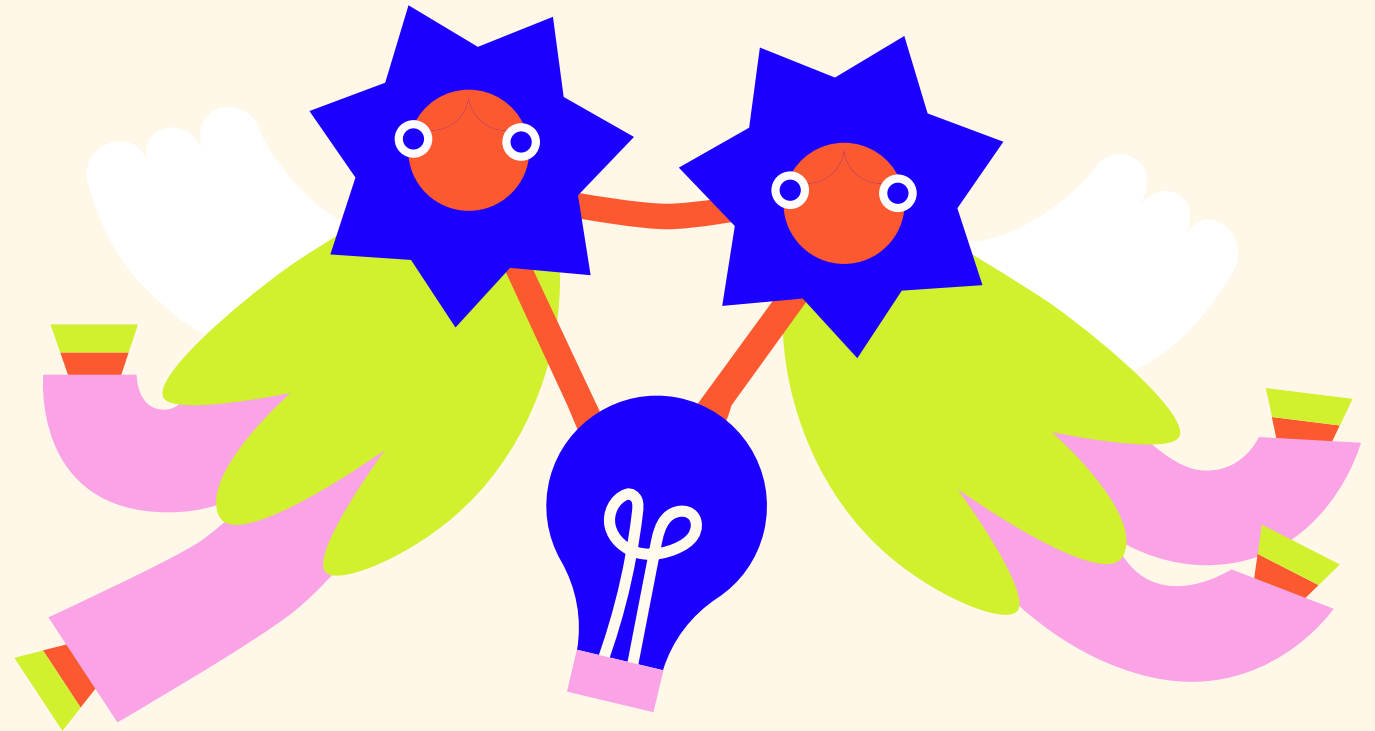
This combination offers students new ways to learn and interact, allowing them to develop key digital skills and hone

practical skills at the same time. Following a successful pilot and evaluation by the Department of Informatics, the hybrid classroom is expected to be available on a long-term basis for all University courses in the new informatics building on Bundesstraße starting in February 2026. This will enable flexible, inclusive, resource-efficient, and sustainable teaching that integrates theory and practice.

- The SPARKLE cargo bike—a mobile seminar room for innovative teaching and learning opportunities (Faculty of Mathematics, Informatics and Natural Science)
- Renovation of the Faculty of Education lobby (Faculty of Education)
Hybrid innovation space for immersive teaching (Faculties of Psychology and Human Movement and of Mathematics, Informatics and Natural Sciences)
- Inclusive teaching and learning spaces that are flexible, innovative, and practical (Faculty of Economics)
- A space for creative development in a sustainable environment (University of Hamburg Business School)
- New meeting places for students (Faculty of Mathematics, Informatics and Natural Sciences)
- Toni Cassirer Salon for shaping diverse education (Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences)



Driving Progress



Mass spectrometry for everyone!

Technology platforms make large equipment and facilities accessible to all researchers

As a University of Excellence, the University of Hamburg boasts a wide range of research facilities that enable top-level research using state-of-the-art technology. In 2024 and 2025, a concept for technology platforms (TPs) at the University of Hamburg was developed and implemented, with the aim of streamlining the procurement, use, and maintenance of shared large equipment and facilities. TPs are centers that operate and maintain highly specialized and expensive large-scale research facilities. Scientific staff train researchers in their use and assist them in planning, conducting, and analyzing their experiments. The platforms provide researchers at every stage of their career at the University of Hamburg with access to state-of-the-art methods and techniques.

The TPs enable the strategic and forward-looking development of the research infrastructure at the University of Hamburg—University of Excellence in an inclusive, interdisciplinary, and synergistic manner. This opens the door to a continuous flow of new methods and research approaches. That is why the TPs also played an important role in the self-evaluations submitted as part of the excellence evaluation. In addition, TPs have been contributing to various collaborative projects since 2024, including two

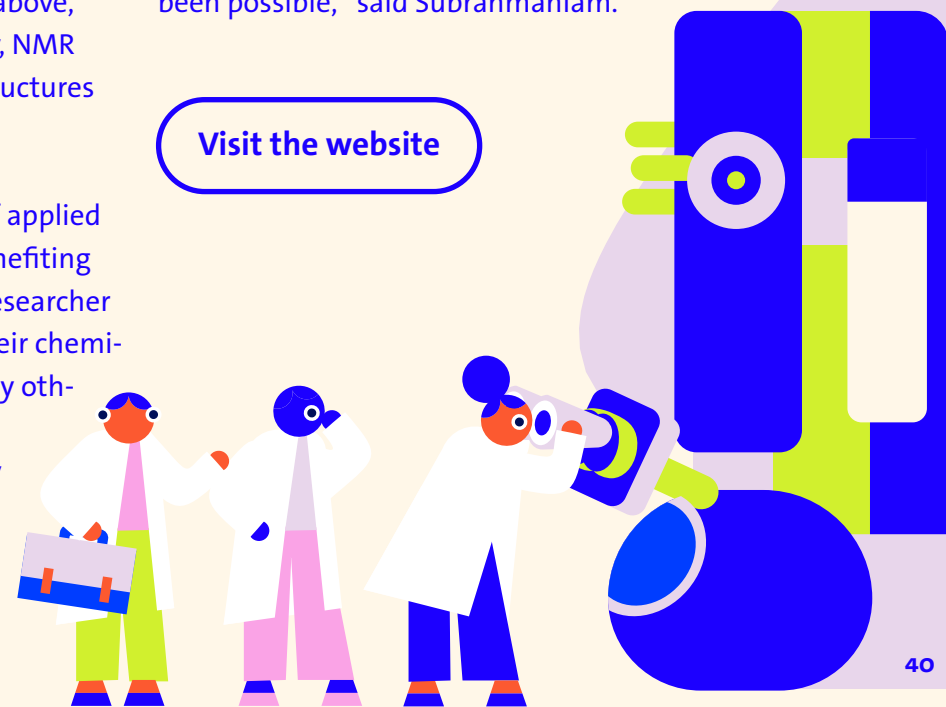
DFG projects directly related to method development. Two of the platforms—Light Microscopy and Electron Cryo-Microscopy—were evaluated in August 2025 and received very positive reviews from international reviewers regarding their equipment and the expertise of their respective teams.

Below, we provide some specifics. Which TPs are available at the University of Hamburg, and for which research projects? In addition to the two TPs mentioned above, there is Electron Microscopy, Mass Spectrometry, NMR Spectroscopy, and the Center for Hybrid Nanostructures Clean Room.

Dr. Jaishree Subrahmaniam's work in the field of applied plant ecology illustrates how researchers are benefiting from the new infrastructure. The postdoctoral researcher is investigating how plant genotypes differ in their chemical fingerprints—a fundamental insight for many other research questions. To carry out her analyses, Subrahmaniam turned to TP Mass Spectrometry and then used liquid chromatography-mass spectrometry instruments. These combine two different methods: First, they separate complex

sample mixtures into their individual components. Then, the molecules contained within can be analyzed based on their mass and structure. “The coordinator of the Technology Platform Mass Spectrometry, Dr. Maria Riedner, and her team supported me every step of the way—from planning the measurements and preparing the samples to conducting the analyses.” They operated the equipment and ensured the data was of high quality. “Without these devices, this part of the research would not have been possible,” said Subrahmaniam.

[Visit the website](#)



From paper to digitalization

How the Department of Finance and Accounting rethinks processes

Change begins when routines are questioned. Long processing times, high pressure, and lots of paperwork were the norm in the Department of Finance and Accounting. Today, the department is undergoing a major transformation, with digital processes, new structures,

and a clear focus on the needs of those it serves.

We spoke with Andrea Hellwig, head of the Department of Finance and Accounting, about change, pace, and working to improve processes.



5 questions for Andrea Hellwig

“Nothing is harder than simplifying; nothing is easier than complicating.”

Georges Elgozy

1

Looking back at when you started, what state was the Department of Finance and Accounting in when you took over?

I started right in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic. Face-to-face meetings were virtually impossible, which made communication all the more important. I made a point of taking the time to get to know my team and the relevant offices at the University. During that time, I saw a very dedicated team working under a great deal of pressure.

It also became clear that many processes had evolved over time and were not always designed with the users in mind. Information was often requested multiple times because processes were not fully coordinated. That’s exactly where we started: scrutinizing processes, coordinating them more effectively, and eliminating unnecessary steps.

2

Can you give an example of a specific situation where digitalization makes a difference?

The digital travel process illustrates this very well. In the past, this meant a lot of paper-work and lengthy processing times. Today, work-related travel expenses can be reimbursed much more quickly. Once the review is complete, payment is processed automatically, significantly reducing the workload for accounting staff. And all documents are available in digital form. This simplifies everyday life and also makes reviews much more efficient.

3

How did you involve your team in these changes?

Change cannot be imposed; it comes about through interaction. That's why I deliberately focus on small group discussions and engage with the teams to shape developments together.

It is important to me to emphasize just how much my colleagues accomplish: despite their heavy workload, they demonstrate great dedication every day and actively support the changes. I also realize that this situation is not sustainable in the long run, which is why we are taking specific steps to alleviate the burden.

Together with my extended leadership team, we're taking a close look at our processes, eliminating unnecessary steps, and setting clearer priorities. Change doesn't happen at a desk but by interacting with colleagues involved in these processes every day. This is how we are

gradually developing the department—with the goal of improving working conditions and stabilizing processes in the long term.

4

What does it mean to think about communication from the users' perspective?

We have deliberately shifted our focus away from in-depth technical information toward easy-to-understand content. What matters most to us is not to provide information in our own technically logical manner but rather from the perspective of the users.

This is particularly evident in the annual financial statements, with content now more clearly structured, in simpler language, and better tailored to actual needs. This makes it clearer what exactly needs to be done, and the number of follow-up questions drops noticeably.

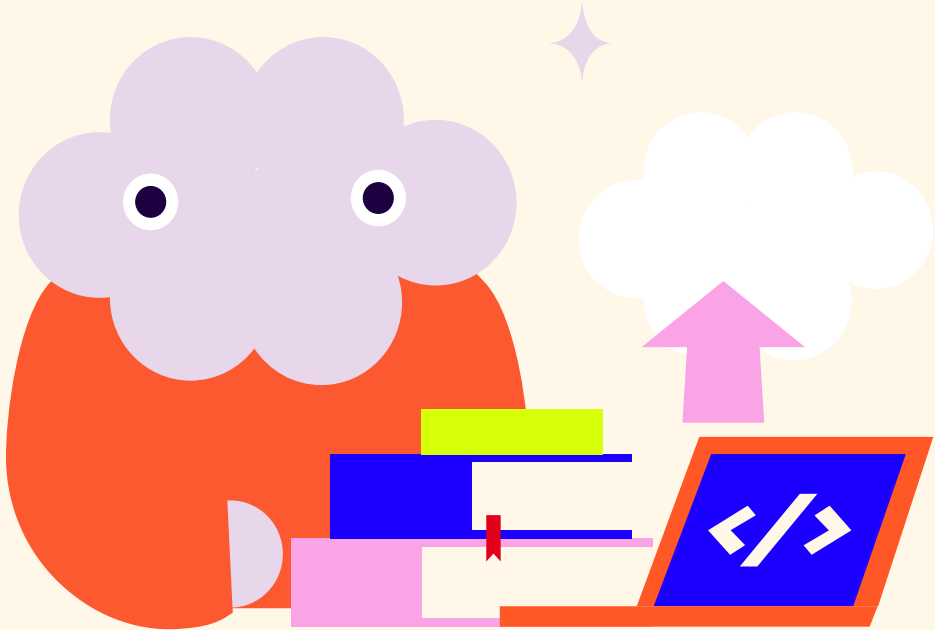
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What are the steps ahead?

We are committed to the path we've embarked on: further streamlining and digitalizing processes while reducing the team's workload. One example is Drive-IT for processing supplier invoices. In digitalized areas, the workload has already been cut by more than half, and some invoices can be paid within a week. We want to continue building on these improvements.

Rethinking the library

The 3i project



The role of libraries is increasingly changing: While access to scholarly publications used to be the core focus of library work, the demands of digitalization, open science, and the opportunities AI offers have become significantly more complex. In 2025, the University of Hamburg launched the 3i change project in collaboration with the State and University Library Carl von Ossietzky (SUB). The term 3i stands for “information supply, information provision, and information processing.” In addition to the SUB, faculty and specialist libraries at the University of Hamburg, as well as institutions like the Center for Sustainable Research

Data Management (ZFD) and the University Archives, are participating in this project, which aims to modernize and future-proof the system’s services for the University of Hamburg.

But what do the three i’s actually mean? The term information supply refers to information that researchers and students use, such as academic literature, textbooks, teaching materials, primary data, (specialist) databases, scientific collections, papers, and archives. Information provision refers to information that emerges in the research process. This includes, above all, data sources from

researchers and publications of all kinds as well as information supplied by supporting infrastructure, such as libraries and the Center for Sustainable Research Data Management. Information processing refers to the methods and techniques linked to the processing of data.

A preliminary study outlined the framework conditions and areas of activity for a future 3i system. The next step is to further develop and implement the vision that has been established. Last year, six subprojects addressed aspects related to information provision, staffing needs and development, service portfolio, innova-

tion, campus development, knowledge spaces, and cultural development. The involvement of staff from different institutions breaks down structural barriers, fostering constructive collaboration in day-to-day work. The journey towards a 3i system, a minimum viable product that can be tested and optimized as the process unfolds, is the destination.

The first signs of success are already visible, such as the introduction of new procedures for purchasing license packages. This leads not only to more efficient resource usage but also a better mutual understanding among those involved—good prerequisites for the rest of the 3i process.

[Visit the website \(German only\)](#)

Simple. Secure. Simply secure.

Sign in once, access all web applications—the University of Hamburg’s Faculty of Medicine at the University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf has simplified its log-in systems. Via a single sign-on (SSO) tool, students and staff will soon be able to access all of the faculty’s key online services using their user ID without having to log in multiple times. These include, among others, the iMED-Campus course management system, the Moodle learning platform, and the research information system. Employees will also gain access to the Nextcloud collaboration platform for teamwork and file sharing as well as to the faculty’s GitLab DevSecOps platform. Additional applications will be integrated gradually in the future. SSO not only makes logging in easier but also more secure. In addition to two-factor authentication, passkeys can now also be used. Passkeys are a particularly secure and convenient method to log in without a password.

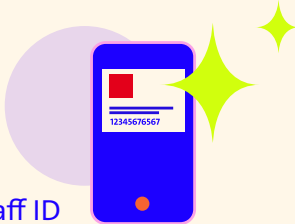
[Read more about the SSO tool
\(German only\)](#)

The whole University in your pocket

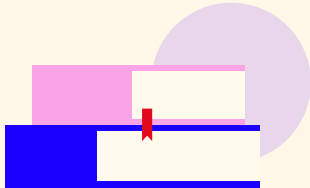
Digitalization that benefits everyone: with its wide range of features, the new UHHApp provides a central platform that significantly simplifies and enriches everyday life on campus. It makes information more accessible and helps students and staff connect, while also allowing all users to experience the campus digitally—a clear signal that we are a forward-thinking university for which technology-supported services are a given.

What does UHHApp offer?

Digital IDs:
Student and staff ID
right on your smartphone



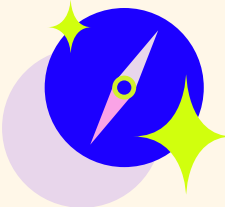
Library:
Access to your library account,
loans, requests, and fees



News:
Customizable news feeds
from the Newsroom



**Student cafeteria
information:**
Menus, opening hours,
allergens, additives,
favorites, and a naviga-
tion feature



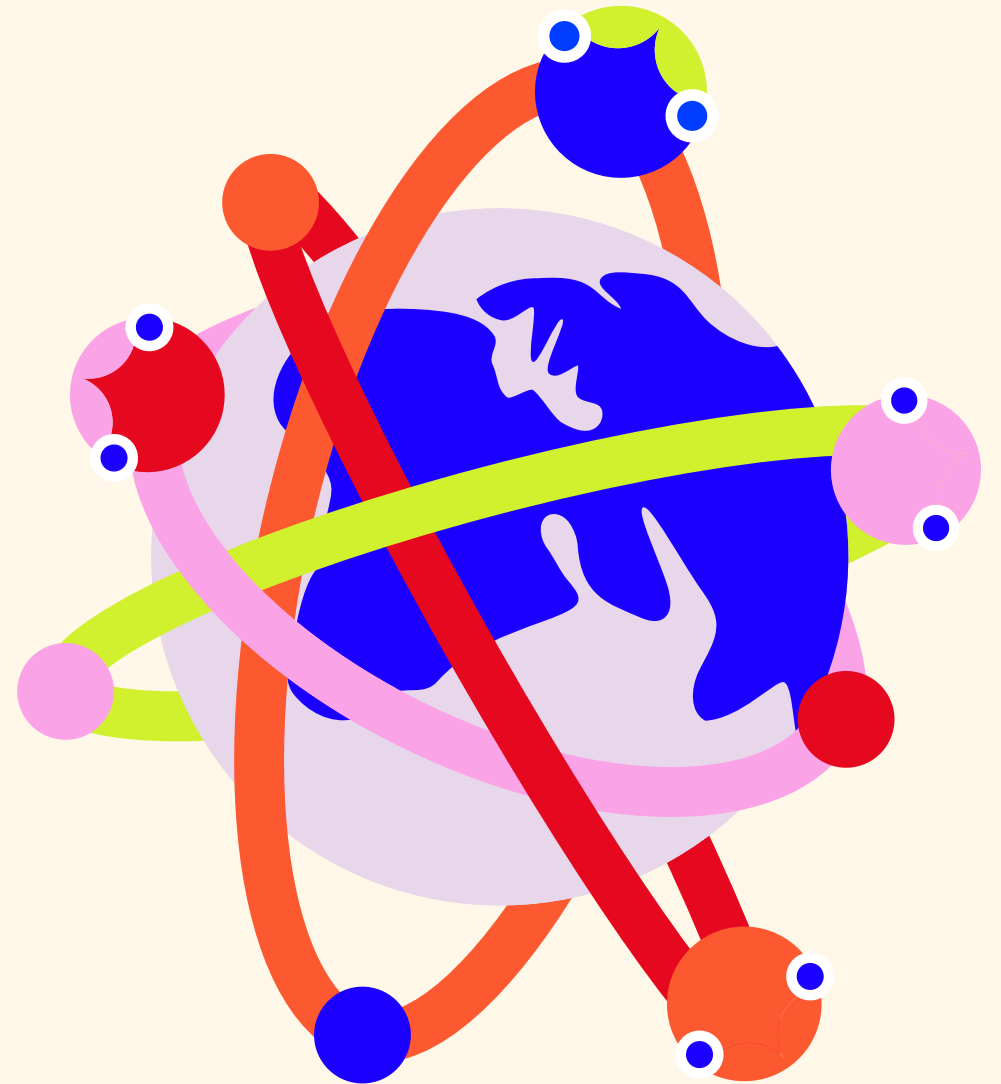
Campus Navigator:
Campus guide

and much more!

UHHApp is available for free:



Breaking Down Barriers



Administration without borders

University administration skills strengthened through GloCAA

Internationalization has long been part of everyday life at the University of Hamburg, with international students, global research collaborations, and academics from around the world. With this development, the demands on university administration are also growing, for example, in the academic offices, HR services, and advising centers.

This is precisely where the Global Competence for Academic Administration (GloCAA) certificate program comes in, which from 2027 is to be funded by the Excellence Strategy. The aim is to strengthen the global competence of technical, administrative, and library staff so that they can act confidently in German and English in a target-group-specific and service-oriented manner in an increasingly diverse environment.

In this interview, project manager Dr. Elisabeth Trepesch (Department of International Affairs) explains why a globally competent administration is a strategic key to the University's future:



4 questions for Dr. Elisabeth Trepesch

1

As a University of Excellence, the University of Hamburg competes internationally. But to what extent is internationalization also an administrative issue?

Internationalization only works if it is supported by all areas of the University. If you want to attract and retain international researchers and students in the long term, you need to create structures that promote inclusion and are culturally sensitive and anti-racist. A globally competent administration strengthens the attractiveness of the University of Hamburg for international talent, promotes a welcoming culture, and also contributes to central cross-cutting issues such as equity and sustainable organizational development. Administration is therefore a decisive factor in the successful implementation of the University of Hamburg's internationalization strategy.

HELLO! WELCOME!

2 Internationalization as a field of action at the University of Hamburg sounds very big and abstract at first. How does internationalization specifically change everyday working life in administration, and how can employees benefit from GloCAA?

We often find internationalization in very specific situations: in counseling sessions with international students, in explaining complex administrative processes in English, or in dealing with different academic cultures. Thus, with the increasing internationality of the University, the demands on administrative staff are also growing. This is exactly where GloCAA comes in.

Faculty of Mathematics, Informatics and Natural Sciences and the Faculty of Business, Economics and Social Sciences have been taking part in the certificate program. In this context, they are developing their skills in subject-specific language courses at the Language Center and in workshops, for example, on culturally sensitive work or anti-discriminatory action. This therefore transfers GloCAA content directly into practice.

Since July 2025, a pilot group of around 20 employees from the academic offices of the

4 Is there anything else you would like to say to your colleagues in administration?

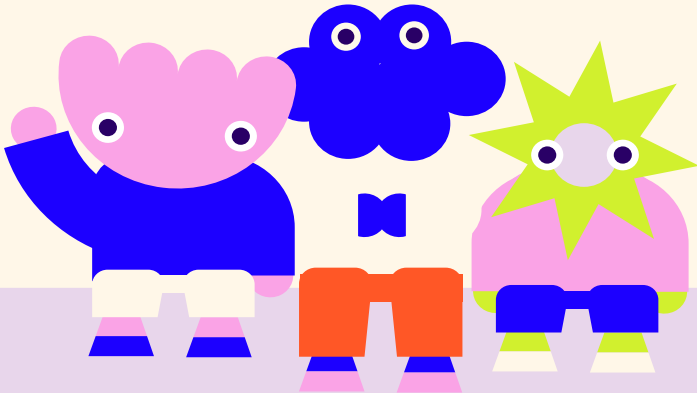
In light of work intensification, cost-cutting targets, and vacancies, skills in the area of international affairs may seem secondary; however, especially in the current situation, I would like to encourage everyone to see GloCAA as a potential source of support. Hardly anything has shaped me as much as my stays abroad during my studies and professional life. Therefore, I would urge you to take advantage of these opportunities for professional and personal development whenever you can.

3 In the best-case scenario, individual measures will result in sustained cultural change within the University of Hamburg. What factors are decisive for the effective further development of the administration in terms of internationalization?

In addition to time, it requires commitment on the part of employees, support from supervisors, and reliable funding for the measures. International exchange is equally important, both within the University and with our international partner institutions. This often results in completely new ideas for our own working environment, and we have to create formats that promote their sustainable transfer into everyday working life. Internationalization also means designing administrative processes in a way that makes them transparent, easy to understand, inclusive, and efficient for all members of the University of Hamburg—regardless of language skills, ethnic origin, or academic background, for example. If we manage to establish appropriate structures, the University as a whole will benefit in the end.

Find out more about GloCAA

Outstanding teaching stands out!



Motivational, interdisciplinary, innovative—the University of Hamburg offers numerous excellent courses every semester. To recognize outstanding teaching and raise public awareness of innovative teaching methods, the annual University of Hamburg Teaching Award has been established. The inaugural presentation of the award took place on 6 May 2025 as part of the Hauptsache Lehre event, organized in collaboration with the Hamburg Center for University Teaching and Learning (HUL).

The University of Hamburg Teaching Award is presented in three categories, each carrying a prize of €2,000. Five dedicated teachers were honored this year: Dr. Susanne Koch (Faculty of Mathematics, Informatics and Natural Sciences) in the category Inspiring and Effective Teaching; Anton Sefkow (Faculty of Law), Lukas Musumeci (HUL), and Marten Borchers (Faculty of Mathematics, Informatics and Natural Sciences) in the category Innovative Interdisciplinary Teaching; and Prof. Dr. Parisa Moll-Khosrawi, (adjunct lecturer at the University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf [UKE]) in the category Development and Advancement of Teaching.

Altogether, 275 nominations for the Teaching Award were submitted by students, teachers, researchers, and administrative staff of the University. Teachers were not allowed to nominate themselves. A jury, composed of the vice president for studies and teaching, five students, two teachers, and a HUL member selected the award winners from the pool of nominees. The event also honored the achievements of teaching staff, and student tutors who have earned higher education teaching certificates from the HUL.

“The introduction of the new Teaching Award, which is awarded to University of Hamburg teachers only, has been an important step in honoring the passion, creativity, commitment, innovation talent, and courage with which our teaching staff strive for development. The large number of nominees shows that this award was overdue at the University. It also shows the diversity of excellent teaching at our University and reflects a broad commitment,” said Prof. Dr. Natalia Filatkina, vice president for studies and teaching, at the awards ceremony in the atrium of the State and University Library.

The University of Hamburg Teaching Award is presented in three categories, each carrying a prize of €2,000:

1 Inspiring and Effective Teaching

2 Innovative and Interdisciplinary Teaching

3 Development and Advancement of Teaching

Innovative and interdisciplinary teaching



In an interview with the award winners Anton Sefkow, Marten Borchers, and Lukas Musumeci:

1 What did you teach in your course?

In our course Innovation by Legal Design Thinking, students in the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Mathematics, Informatics and Natural Sciences analyzed real processes and challenges with the goal of optimizing them. To do so, they used legal design thinking with the goal of collaboratively developing a solution by creating a working digital prototype. The participants worked independently with support from the teaching team and other experts. The teaching project provided valuable insights into innovative working methods and the automation of legal applications, which are important not only for academic studies but also for future professional practice.

2 What was particularly important to you when designing these courses?

For us, the transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary nature of the project and the agile approach were crucial. In this way, we enabled participants to engage in discussions that went far beyond their own skills and experiences and to work in a problem-oriented manner. The agile working approach based on collaboration among equals was particularly important for developing solutions to problems involving ambiguous requirements. We also met this challenge by outlining initial solutions at an early stage and then testing them to refine them further.

3 What do you think good teaching is?

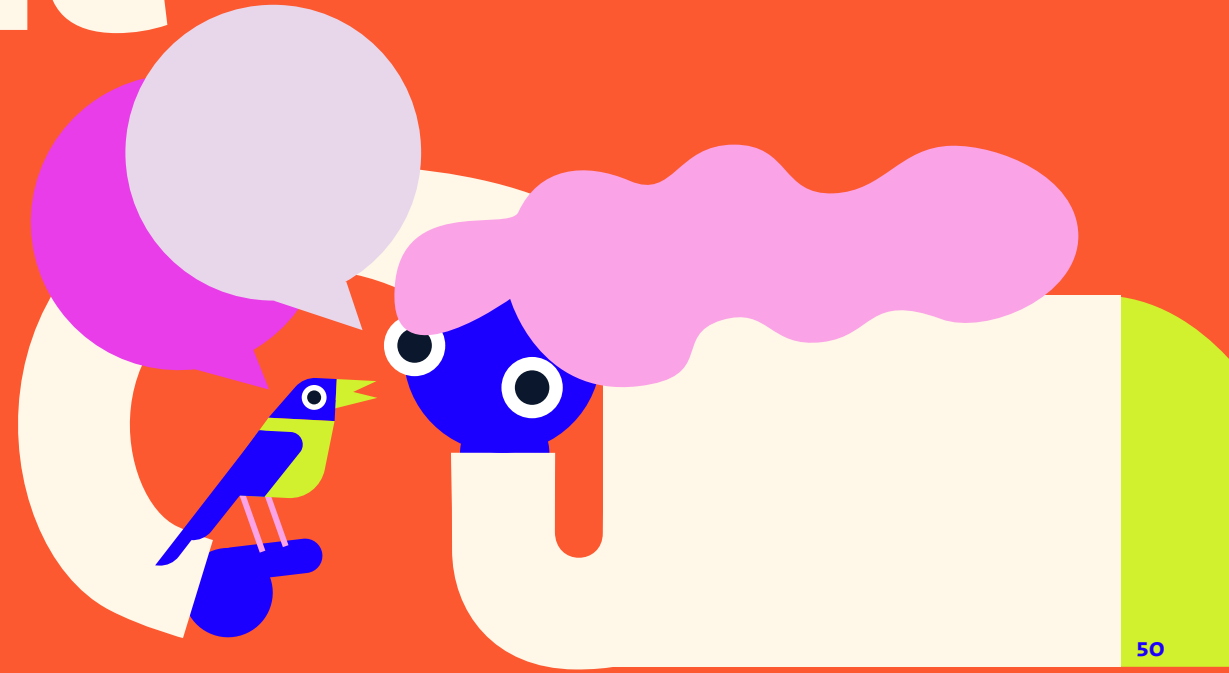
Anton: In my opinion, good teaching is characterized by taking students' perspectives seriously and trying to see things from their point of view. You ask yourself whether you find their ideas interesting, whether you can use them in your work, and how they might contribute to your own progress, for example, in formal use. If you can answer all three questions, your teaching is most likely good.

Marten: For me, it's about practicality and having the courage to embrace imperfection. In innovation projects, requirements are rarely clear-cut, and you have to learn to live with uncertainties and be willing to tackle them head-on.

Lukas: Good teaching involves establishing yourself as an authority in your subject and the personal growth that results from learning through research. This shift in authority becomes abundantly clear in our classes, at the very latest, when we as teachers hand over the design process entirely to our students, and they accept the responsibility without hesitation. This moment moves me every time.

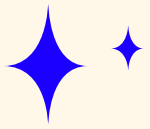
Read interviews with the other award winners

University of Hamburg in Dialogue



Breaking down structures and exploring new paths

Strategic communication as a factor of excellence



1

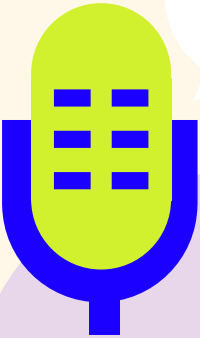
The annual report is themed “Moving forward.” To what extent must university communication move on from traditional structures and reinvent itself, especially now?

We are living in a time of multiple crises, social tensions, and rapid technological change. Communication, particularly communication in higher education and research, plays a crucial role in this regard: it can build trust, strengthen public institutions, and firmly anchor research and its institutions in societal discourse. To achieve this, we must equip our researchers with the necessary skills, provide guidance, and help them build resilience so that we can all respond appropriately to disinformation or skepticism toward science.

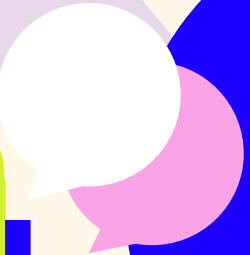
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What role does research communication play today in the University of Excellence status?

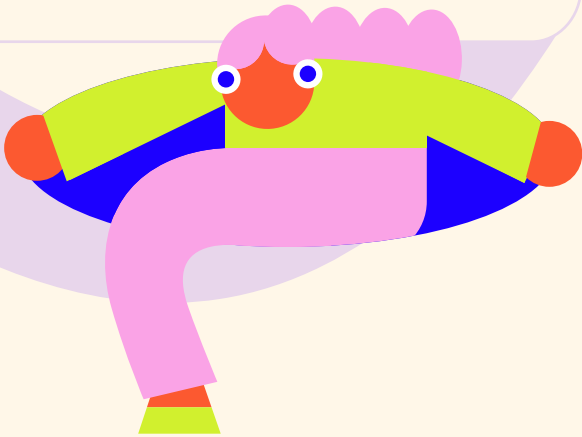
It has finally been recognized as systemically important and part of the overall strategy at an increasing number of higher education institutions. All major research-funding organizations have included mandatory standards for research communication and knowledge exchange in their calls for applications. Guidelines were also developed to foster a culture of recognition in the #FactoryWisskomm initiative, led by the Federal Ministry of Research, Technology, and Space (BM-FTR). We have adapted this for our own use and incorporated it into our guiding principle. What matters to us is that we help our researchers, starting from the early stages of their careers, to view communication and knowledge exchange as an integral part of their academic identity. Both are integral to the academic DNA of a University of Excellence and should not only be supported but also recognized in academic competition.



6 questions for
Katrin Greve



Katrin Greve, head of the Marketing and Communication Department, on rethinking research communication in the age of artificial intelligence.



3 Artificial intelligence is currently changing everything. Where do the greatest opportunities lie for day-to-day work in university communication?

AI is a powerful tool for improving efficiency. In our central University communication, we already use generative tools for monitoring and for drafting texts, project plans, and PR materials. The opportunity lies in scalability and speed. In addition, AI helps us make our websites more user-friendly, which increases our visibility on search engines and—we assume—with AI bots. In the end, however, we shouldn't underestimate the fact that it is people who make the decisions. AI can only make suggestions; humans determine whether it achieves the desired effect. Sensitivity and responsibility are particularly important when it comes to the application of AI in the scientific and higher education sectors, because we demand thorough fact-checking and must thus provide it ourselves.

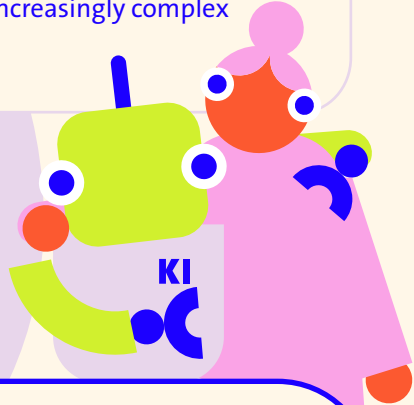


4 How does the entire University benefit from this technological transformation? Does your department also see itself as a service provider for the faculties?

Absolutely. We definitely see ourselves as ambassadors—just like some other departments at the University—and certainly as enablers. As part of large-scale projects, such as the website redesign or the launch of the social intranet, we encourage our colleagues to use AI tools. We provide sample prompts for this purpose. The social intranet will also feature an AI-powered translation function. As is likely the case in many areas, our goal is to free up our resources from routine operational tasks so that we have more time to focus on content quality, consulting services, and personal dialogue.

5 If AI is now taking over production and distribution, is there even a need for professionals anymore?

More than ever! AI can generate a lot of things for us, but it cannot define strategic goals or replace personal interactions. We demonstrated this at the annual conference of the Bundesverband Hochschulkommunikation, which we hosted this year: while the welcome address in the Audimax by the president's avatar was technically flawless and very realistic, no AI could replace the authenticity and impact of seeing the real Hauke Heekeren live on stage afterward. It should also be noted that the more content generated by AI floods our world—especially via social media—the more important it becomes for the University to maintain a professional presence across all channels. This required expertise in key communication roles, as the system is becoming increasingly complex and fragile.



6 Finally, what is the most important goal for the coming year?

We want to keep improving our use of AI transformation and shape it in a way that gives us the flexibility to explore new formats and channels, particularly to reach a younger audience. In addition, we are expanding our interactive and participatory formats, which we have already successfully implemented through our Lab for Tomorrow at the University Museum.

And my personal goal is to further embed our president's guiding principle—the culture of communication—strategically across all areas of the University, so that research communication also becomes a core element that is actively practiced and valued in every aspect of our University.

Read the guiding principles for science and research communication (German only)

Casting a wide net

The Global Innovation Circle on Higher Education

A network of networks— the Global Innovation Circle on Higher Education (GICHE) aims to provide a space for long-term and inclusive global dialogue and knowledge exchange on strategic issues related to international higher education development. Launched in 2025 as part of the University of Hamburg’s International Strategy Conferences initiative for the Excellence Strategy in cooperation with the Volkswagen Foundation and the German Rectors’ Conference, this initiative aims to jointly develop solution-oriented approaches and sustainable momentum for an international higher education landscape that is ready for the future.

The GICHE kickoff event took place 23–24 October 2025 in the Herrenhausen Palace in Hannover. Under the theme “Building Innovative Networks in Complex Times: What Lies Ahead for International Collaboration in Higher Education?” the conference brought

together leaders from 19 major international higher education networks. About 35 representatives attended.

The University of Hamburg is a member or signatory of five of the networks represented. The University of Hamburg’s strategic partners, profile partners, and/or EUGLOH partners are members of 18 networks. Of these, 70 percent represent institutions from the Global South, including central networks from South America, Africa, and Southeast Asia. Institutions from northern Europe, the United Kingdom, and/or the Netherlands are represented in eight networks; THE GUILD and LERU also participated, representing the most important networks of European research universities.

The interactive plenary sessions and workshops at the kickoff event focused on core values and shared responsibilities in global academic partnerships; the role of knowl-

edge equity, diversity, and inclusion in international cooperation; and strategies for fostering successful international networks in an era of growing complexity and disruptive change. In addition, innovative topics and formats for collaboration were discussed.

“At the University of Hamburg, we are convinced that our complex global challenges can be met only with a joint global response—and that the university landscape must play a leading role in this. Through GICHE, we, as a University of Excellence, are taking on this responsibility and, together with our partners, are creating a platform that brings together decision-makers from the most important higher education networks across all continents,” explains Prof. Dr. Hauke Hecker- en, president of the University of Hamburg.



Keeping watch together 24/7

Security operations center



Universities process a wide range of highly sensitive data, such as research data and personal information. Thus, they are increasingly becoming the target of cyberattacks. A security operations center is used to monitor IT systems, networks, and IT applications. At best, a security operations center is part of a comprehensive security system of organizations that can identify security incidents, suspicious activity, or hacker attacks early enough to prevent them. Hamburg’s universities are working closely together on this. The University of Hamburg and Indiana University in the United States have also laid the foundations for joint international higher education security operations with a letter of intent.

In the future, both universities will share threat intelligence, and real-time channels will be established for this purpose. This will allow both institutions to quickly learn

from each other’s insights, methods, and response strategies. Furthermore, attacks that can affect multiple networks and interest groups can be better investigated when working together. Both universities also plan to develop joint research projects, student exchange programs, and professional development opportunities in the field of cyber-security.

International cooperation brings together information on potential threats. However, intercontinental cooperation also offers a long-term practical benefit: seamless, round-the-clock protection without incurring the additional HR or financial costs associated with a multishift system. The agreement with Indiana University is just the start; more universities are expected to join to build an effective network together, thus creating a resilient university IT infrastructure.

Forging New Paths



Moving forward is not just an event; it is a process. Choosing our path carefully, we keep moving, one step at a time, to bring about sustainable change. We look with curiosity and courage toward the unknown while **forging new paths.**



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to Sustainability

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Many Varied Ways to Sustainability



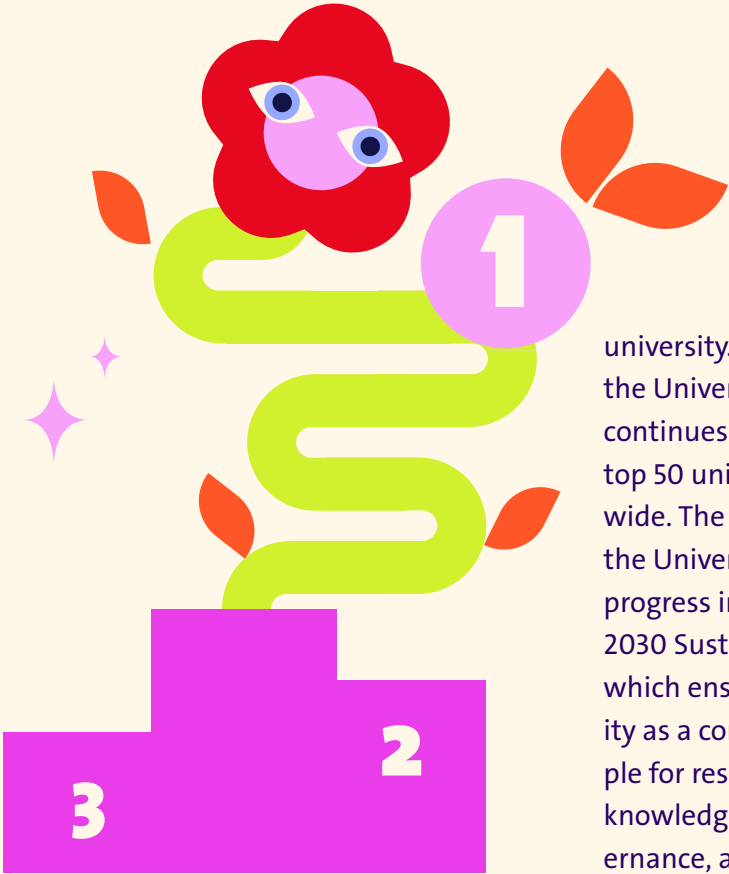
Living sustainability

With 55 pages, 54 goals, and more than 100 defined measures, the University of Hamburg’s 2030 Sustainability Strategy is now complete following an intensive participatory process. The development process included a variety of participatory formats organized by the Sustainability Office, workshops and consultations with faculties, academic departments, and partner organizations, as well as feedback from working groups, sustainability labs, committees, and experts. Of course, key framework conditions were taken into account during the development process, including the University of Hamburg’s digitalization strategy (UHH.digital) as a twin strategy, existing strategy documents from other universities as a guide, current requirements under the CSRD and ESRS, as well as approaches to sustainability indicators and relevant university rankings. Important insights were also taken from the findings of the German Rectors’ Conference (HRK) Sustainability at Universities audit, in which the University of Hamburg participated as a pilot institution. The audit process—which included a kick-off workshop, internal self-reflection, and the audit mission that took place from 2 to 4 April 2025—played a key role in shaping the strategic direction.

Read more about the HRK audit

Learn more about the Sustainability Strategy

Germany’s best in QS Sustainability Ranking



university. Internationally, the University of Hamburg continues to rank among the top 50 universities worldwide. The result underscores the University’s steady progress in implementing its 2030 Sustainability Strategy, which enshrines sustainability as a core guiding principle for research, teaching, knowledge exchange, governance, and operations.

The University of Hamburg has once again confirmed its leading position in the field of sustainability by defending its top spot in the QS Sustainability Ranking as Germany’s most sustainable

This success is particularly remarkable given the significantly increased competition. In Germany, 65 universities were evaluated in the current ranking, which was up from 50 the previous

year. Internationally, over 1,500 universities participated—about 250 more than the year before. In the world rankings, the University of Hamburg placed 46th, on par with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), University College Dublin, and the Universities of Exeter and Tokyo. “This outstanding ranking shows how deeply rooted sustainability is in our University culture. It reflects the activity of many people who are making teaching, research, and administrative operations more sustainable step by step. Our goal is to connect excellence with lived responsibility, in our daily activities and amidst social change,” says Prof. Dr. Laura Marie Edinger-Schons, the University of Hamburg’s chief sustainability officer.

The ABC of EDI

Excellence means more than just top-level research and outstanding teaching; it also thrives on equity, diversity, and a culture of recognition and openness. Excellence therefore encompasses equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). The University of Hamburg aims to establish an organizational culture that promotes equity and condemns discrimination. The new equity and diversity pages show how these values shape the University's identity. For the first time, the University website brings together in one (digital) space the various activities, projects, and individuals promoting equity and diversity at the University.

ABC stands for access, belonging, and community—the principles of our University's equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts. We believe in creating access, fostering a sense of belonging, and strengthening community for a lively, diverse, and open academic culture as the basis of scholarly excellence.

[Visit the equity and diversity website](#)

Facilitating access

We create equitable access to education, teaching, research, and careers regardless of your life situation, identity, or background. In addition to equal opportunity, accessibility, and family-friendly measures, we would like to highlight the Hamburg Research Academy, the Hub of Academic Career and Research Culture, gender- and diversity-oriented scouting, guidelines on diversity-sensitive teaching, and programs for visiting scholars.

Fostering a sense of belonging

We encourage a culture of belonging in which diversity is experienced as enriching. To this end, we promote respect for and acceptance of differences in studies, teaching, research, and work. We coordinate the Diversity Days, a welcome service for international researchers, and other projects such as all-gender restrooms, tampon and pad dispensers, parent-child rooms, and the interfaith Room of Contemplation. The Agathe Lasch Coaching + Diversity Program and the University's various mentoring programs also contribute to a sense of belonging.

Promoting community

We foster community as a basis for open, diverse academic culture. Exchange, cooperation, and solidarity create a perfect climate for academic freedom in research and teaching. Networks create dynamic social opportunities for people to exchange, support one another, and do things together. For example, there is the LGBTIQA* network Science and Belong, the feminist legal community FLINTA\$TISCH, and the collective responsibility project on racism at universities.

New Horizons



Seven at one blow

New degree programs at the University of Hamburg

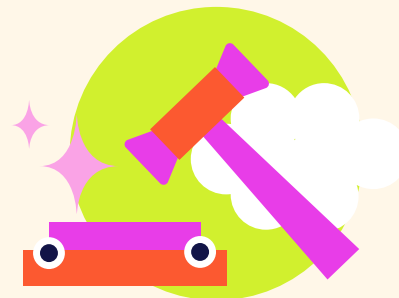
There are over 180 degree programs at the University of Hamburg—University of Excellence, with regular updates to the range of courses on offer. We always focus on current developments and topics for the future. This is also evident from the seven new degree programs introduced in Winter Semester 2025/26. These programs reflect current developments and future trends such as artificial intelligence, digitalization, and internationalization, as well as changing student needs in the face of a changing labor market.



Earth System Physics (BSc)

The first bachelor's degree program at the University of Hamburg taught entirely in English combines geophysics, oceanography, and meteorology and offers a smooth transition to the University's international master's degree programs. Students gain insights into interdisciplinary top-level research on climate change in the CLICCS cluster of excellence as well as comprehensive mathematical and physical understanding of the Earth system—such as volcanoes, clouds, tornadoes, ocean currents, and sea ice.

[Read more about the degree program](#)



Law (integrated LLB)

Once students have completed the required number of modules—including the term paper in their area of specialization, which counts as the bachelor's thesis—law students will automatically receive a bachelor's degree. To this end, the degree program introduced modules and was aligned with Bologna standards. Although the main goal of the program is the Staatsexamen (state examination), the integrated degree allows students to gain an additional qualification and enhances their employability in an international context.

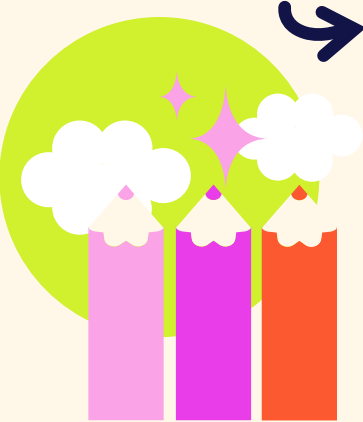
[Read more about the degree program](#)



Intellectics: The Science of AI (MA)

How do people interact with AI systems, and how is knowledge about human culture processed in these systems? These questions are addressed in this English-language master's degree program by combining data engineering and informatics with topics in philosophy, ethics, and logic. This is achieved through collaboration between the Department of Philosophy; the Cluster of Excellence Understanding Written Artefacts; the Faculty of Mathematics, Informatics and Natural Science; and the Hub of Computing and Data Science.

[Read more about the degree program](#)



Teacher training: Degree components in Alevi religion, Islamic religion, and Catholic religion

Students in all teacher training degree programs can now choose degree components in the Alevi religion, Islamic religion, or Catholic religion. These components provide sound training in the respective theological tradition while also focusing on interreligious dialogue, ensuring students are well prepared for teaching in multireligious classrooms.

[Read more about the degree components](#)



Public History (MA)

This research-based master’s degree program focuses on the media formats through which history has been and continues to be produced, disseminated, and interpreted—in the past and the present. Students take a highly practical approach to their work, designing and carrying out their own history projects in collaboration with members of the community. Students are mentored throughout the program and document and reflect upon their own development, further enhancing their profile within the discipline.

[Read more about the degree program](#)

Opening communication between academia and the public

In an interview on the next page, Kerlin Buchholtz and René Ocklenburg, the student ambassadors for the first cohort of the MA in Public History, explain what makes this new master’s degree program so special.



Student representatives for the first cohort of the Master of Arts in Public History
Kerlin Buchholtz
René Ocklenburg



1 What distinguishes the MA in Public History from a traditional history program?

Kerlin: In our class, we have a high degree of interdisciplinarity due to our diverse academic backgrounds, which include theater, music, communication, media studies, history, psychology, and German studies. This is rather unusual for a traditional history program and also changes our perspective on history itself. We focus heavily on formats—that is, how history is generally addressed and experienced in the public sphere. This ranges from movies to completely unexpected examples, such as East Frisian tea ceremonies.

2 What role does the integration of research and practice play in this context?

René: As early as our first semester, we had the opportunity to interact with several guest speakers from various fields who introduced us to connections both within and outside the University. Naturally, that was very valuable to us, because it allowed us to see just how diverse the applications of history really are in practice. We plan to further strengthen these partnerships in the third semester. Then we want to actively transfer our own projects in collaboration with stakeholders from the greater Hamburg area.

3 In an age of rapidly circulating narratives, dealing with history is becoming increasingly complex. What skills will you develop to critically analyze historical accounts?

Kerlin: We learn to analyze various forms of historical representation—such as text, audiovisual media, and performative formats—and also to create them ourselves. So we focus not only on how to conduct sound scientific research but also on how to bring this content from the University to the public. The MA in Public History thus views history as a discipline that is constantly being retold and reinterpreted rather than merely as a static medium.

4 Why is it socially important to examine different approaches to communicating history?

René: The rise of right-wing movements, fascist tendencies, developments such as deepfakes, and the extremely fast-paced nature of the internet—all of these current trends influence how history is perceived. We must therefore learn how to share and convey history in a way that ensures it is understood and not distorted. This includes how to deal with misinformation and historical revisionism.

Kerlin: Historical knowledge is essential to the very functioning of a democratic society. Without an understanding of the past, it becomes difficult to make sense of the present. And in the best-case scenario, good history education can also influence social debates, or at least make them more nuanced.

“Every medium conveys historical elements in its own specific way.”

Here to stay

WELCOME

International talent for the Hamburg labor market

The shortage of skilled workers has long been noticeable, especially in the STEM sector. At the same time, many talented international students at the University of Hamburg will be looking for jobs once they have completed their studies.

This is precisely where the DAAD-funded project MIN För Hamburg comes in. Led by the Department of International Affairs, it is a broad network involving the Career Center, faculties, the Language Center, and municipal partners working closely together. The aim is to systematically support international students from enrollment, throughout their studies, and at the start of their careers, while also building their linguistic, professional, and social skills.

The project's coordinator, Franziska Werner-Saidi of the Department of International Affairs, explains why the project is more than just a support service for international students:

Visit the MIN För website

1

Forecasts predict a shortfall of around 240,000 skilled workers in Germany by 2026. What role can the University of Hamburg play in securing skilled workers for Hamburg?

We have a very clear global social responsibility here. The international students we train bring enormous potential with them, which, ideally, should develop in the Hamburg job market. However, between commencing studies and starting a career, there are often hurdles: language uncertainties, a lack of networks, or ambiguities in application processes. Therefore, MIN För Hamburg has created offers and structures that help international students orient themselves, integrate into networks at an early stage, and thus build sustainable bridges to the local job market.



Franziska Werner-Saidi

2

For MIN För Hamburg to be successfully implemented, it will need sustainable structures. What has already been done?

From its beginning, the response to the project has been very positive from all sides. However, building a network both within the University and with the partner organizations took more time than expected. Although cooperation across departmental boundaries is still associated with challenges, I see this as a valuable opportunity for fundamental changes in the way we work. Project-based work offers the opportunity to break down silo thinking and to promote more flexible, interdisciplinary collaboration.



3

What drives you as project coordinator of MIN För Hamburg?

I am motivated above all by the idea of equity and diversity. I can see how much innovative strength and motivation international students bring with them. If we manage to keep our students in Germany in the long term, we will not only have counteracted the shortage of skilled workers but will also have sent a strong signal for an open and more diverse university and society.

Careers in academia: Paths and detours

An interview with Prof. Dr. Elisa Schaum

Not every academic career follows a straight path. This is shown by Prof. Dr. Elisa Schaum, professor of plankton ecology and evolution in the Faculty of Mathematics, Informatics and Natural Sciences and head of Research Training Group 2530: Biota-Mediated Effects on Carbon Cycling in Estuaries. Schaum's journey took her through various fields of research and to Rostock, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, New Zealand, and South Africa. Below, she talks about how her path shaped her research and why cooperation and targeted funding are vital to scientific innovation.



Prof. Elisa Schaum

1

Elisa, your career path is rather unconventional for an academic. What experiences have left a lasting impression on you?

During my studies, I spent a semester abroad in Edinburgh and immediately fell in love with the rugged beauty of the Scottish Highlands. Then I had the great fortune to be able to complete my Diplom and master's degree in marine science through a dual program at the University of Rostock and the Scottish Association for Marine Science. This was followed by several smaller jobs and internships, from the Netherlands and New Zealand to South Africa, a doctoral dissertation that I started but which, unfortunately, didn't work out, and, finally, a successful doctoral dissertation, not in marine chemistry or oceanography, but in evolutionary biology, back in Edinburgh. There, I was able to gain a whole new perspective on issues related to climate change. The advisors for my master's degree thesis and doctoral dissertation (Kim Last and Sinead Collins) had a lasting impact on me; it's rare to find people who are so incredibly smart and yet so kind. After that, I secured a postdoctoral position in Exeter, where I was able to explore the topic of climate change from an ecophysiological perspective until I began a tenure-track assistant professorship at the University of Hamburg.

“Good questions are best answered together.”

2

In your opinion, how can such detours be particularly valuable in academia?

It was wonderful and helpful for me to get to know so many different perspectives and people, both in and out of academia. Personally, and with regard to my research, I have been able to build up a toolkit of knowledge in oceanography, marine biology, and evolutionary biology, and this has led to collaboration, ideas, and networks that likely would not have emerged otherwise.

3

You emphasize the importance of collaboration in science. What role does collaboration play in your own successful career?

Good questions are best answered together. Looking back on my own career, I don't think I could have successfully navigated the evaluation of my assistant professorship without the ongoing collaboration and support of other researchers, including my own team.

4

How important is it for funding programs to allow researchers to explore new or unconventional research approaches, especially for early-career researchers?

In academia, it sometimes feels like you're making your way through a jungle of rejections and with occasional further rejections to stumble over along the way. That's why the early support from the Ideas and Venture Fund was all the more helpful to me. It boosted my self-confidence and my belief in my own academic abilities. The experiments from this phase laid the groundwork for several successful grant applications to the German Research Foundation (DFG).

5

In 2025, you took over from Prof. Kai Jensen as head of Research Training Group 2530. In this role, what specific impact would you like to have on the next generation of researchers?

For the next generation of researchers, I would like to help them recognize connections between different disciplines (or different aspects of the same discipline) so that they can find new approaches to complex problems, such as climate change. I would also like to continue removing barriers to academia so that researchers, regardless of their possibly complex starting points, can conduct their research work enthusiastically and with the same opportunities in the research training group and beyond.

Visit the RTG 2530 website

Read about the Ideas and Venture Fund

University of Hamburg in Dialogue



Relationship status: Academic

The Relationships and Academic Belonging in Higher Education project

Based on the premise that academic belonging is a central aspect of the educational experience, the Relationships and Academic Belonging in Higher Education (ReAction) project aims to systematically strengthen the quality of relationships in higher education teaching. The project addresses five key relationship types in higher education teaching: interpersonal, interdisciplinary, international, human-machine, and with oneself. Based on this, four interdisciplinary work packages will be implemented to bring about lasting change in the teaching and learning culture and to foster a sense of academic belonging.

The project is one of 119 projects nationwide that have been selected for funding as part of the current Lehrarchitektur (teaching architecture) call for proposals issued by the Foundation Innovation in Higher Education. In



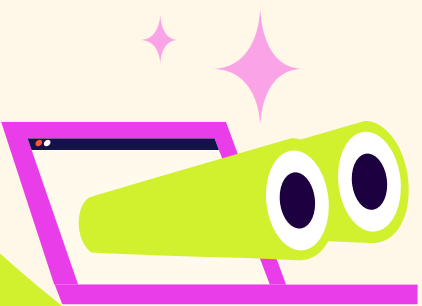
this context, the projects should critically reflect on the goals, structures, and outcomes of their teaching; make ambitious use of existing opportunities within the regulatory and administrative framework; and boldly implement innovative structures. The duration of the projects is a maximum of six years. The total funding provided amounts to approximately €480 million, of which ReAction will receive about €8 million.

For the University of Hamburg, this funding provides a key opportunity to increase its involvement in transformation processes within higher education and society. The successful individual application was a true team

effort. It was developed jointly by the Faculties of Mathematics, Informatics and Natural Science; Humanities; Business Administration; and Education, as well as with the central academic institutions the Hamburg Center for University Teaching and Learning and the Hub of Computing and Data Science. The project began in early October 2025, and Prof. Dr. Gabi Reinmann of the Hamburg Center for University Teaching and Learning serves as the project’s scientific director.

Prof. Dr. Natalia Filatkina, vice president for studies and teaching, is pleased with the successful grant application: “ReAction exemplifies how teaching can be structured as a shared endeavor, highlights the significance of different types of relationships and academic belonging for the student experience, and demonstrates how the twin transformation can be integrated into the student experience and teaching as a strategic guiding principle of the University.” With this proposal, the University of Hamburg is fundamentally rethinking the structure of our teaching, specifically in the areas of student support, the role of AI, experimental curriculum development, collaborative teaching design, and peer tutoring. “I am very pleased about this funding—it gives us the momentum we need to build a university where academic learning is seen as a shared responsibility.”

[Visit the ReAction website](#)



PIER PLUS: New perspectives through AI

This year's PIER Day, held on 25 November 2025, focused on artificial intelligence. In addition to presentations and discussions on PIER's research areas, the PIER PLUS Poster Walk took place for the first time. Under the theme "AI and Science: Unexpected Connections and Method Innovation," researchers presented 20 projects from the metropolitan region and showed how AI methods are opening up new perspectives across various disciplines. Topics included predicting prostate cancer recurrence, machine learning in weather

forecasting, problem diagnosis on the International Space Station, and the reliable identification of mosquito species for disease prevention. The keynote address of the day—delivered by Prof. Dr. Lucie Flek from the University of Bonn—focused on the connections between AI and physics. The event concluded with a panel discussion on Science City Hamburg Bahrenfeld as a hub for AI and data science.

[Learn more about the event](#)

Where research and software development come together

Research software engineers (RSEs) develop, maintain, and improve software used in scientific research. The Hub of Computing and Data Science (HCDS) hosted the first RSE Day Hamburg on 16 July 2025 as a platform for exchange and networking among RSEs. Eighty-six participants from academia, software development, and research infrastructure gathered at Science City Hamburg Bahrenfeld. A poster session featuring 42 presentations highlighted the wide range of ways RSEs operate, from developing sustainable software architecture to machine learning frameworks and citizen science applications. Two inspiring keynote speeches rounded out the program, alongside 17 lightning talks to introduce new tools, methods, and lessons succinctly and practically.

[Read more about the event](#)

The Journey Is the Destination



The power of ideas is truly unlocked when we implement them and when they play out in the wider world. That is why we make change visible to everyone—working together, decisively, and sustainably. Development is a constant process. That is why we keep moving forward. For us, **the journey is the destination.**



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Moving Forward Step by Step



Research like the experts

Funding for student research groups

Students at the University of Hamburg enjoy the opportunity to conduct their own independent research projects thanks to a funding line for student research groups in the Excellence Strategy. Students enrolled in bachelor's, master's, and state examination degree programs who wish to work on a research question in small groups of at least two people are eligible for funding. There is a maximum of €10,000 per project. The project and funding period is limited to one year.

On 1 May 2025, nine projects in the 10th funding cohort started in the Faculties of Education; Mathematics, Informatics and Natural Sciences; Business, Economics and Social Sciences; and Humanities. Starting on 1 November 2025, a further 10 student research groups in the 11th cohort will receive funding for one year. The projects are being conducted in the Faculties of Mathematics, Informatics and Natural

Sciences; Business, Economics and Social Sciences; Humanities; Business Administration; Medicine; and Psychology and Human Movement.

Supervision for the student research groups at the new Hub for Crossdisciplinary Learning has been strengthened thanks to better staffing, particularly with the addition of Gaetano Rago, the new project coordinator. Regular networking and professional development opportunities—including an interdisciplinary workshop, a world café, and a field trip organized in collaboration with the University of Hamburg's Sustainability Office—fostered cross-group, interdisciplinary exchange. Social media posts and public presentations of the research groups' findings further increased the external visibility of the student-led research projects.

In conjunction with the ongoing funding program, the Chamber for Studies and Teaching held a discussion in November 2025

with students who currently receive or have received support under the student research group funding line. Students from the last four cohorts, as well as those who participated in the EXU site visit, shared their experiences and insights, particularly regarding the call for proposals and topics, networking opportunities among students, academic supervision, administrative processes, and the documentation and visibility of the projects. The aim of the exchange was to systematically review past experiences and develop recommendations for future calls for proposals, support structures, and closing formats in EXU II.

On the next page, a student research group introduces itself.



[View the student research groups A–Z](#)

Stress during your period

Spotlight on an underrated area of research

How does stress change throughout the menstrual cycle? A student research group is now investigating this question in their project The Influence of the Menstrual Cycle on Subjective Perception of Stress. The starting point is the observation that female perspectives have often been underrepresented in psychological research.

In a study, 60 female participants will be monitored over the course of one menstrual cycle. The study includes women with natural cycles as well as women who use hormonal contraceptives. The goal is to gain a better

understanding of the relationship between hormonal changes and subjective stress perception.

Medical wearables will be used to continuously measure core body temperature, thereby enabling a precise determination of the phases of the menstrual cycle. In addition, the participants will use an app to track their stress levels on a daily basis. Data collection is scheduled to begin later this year.

“It was important to us to explore a topic that has often been viewed in overly simplistic terms.”



Veronika Zöbelin and Lara Kubotsch are students in the Faculty of Psychology and Human Movement Science, and they offer a glimpse into their project and into research from a student’s perspective:

1 How did the idea to investigate the link between the menstrual cycle and stress come about?

Veronika: While working on my bachelor’s thesis, I realized just how many gaps still exist in research on stress and the menstrual cycle—often, studies only examine snapshots in time, or cycle phases are determined imprecisely.

Lara: That’s exactly what appealed to me: a topic that affects many people but hasn’t been studied enough yet. It quickly became clear to us that we wanted to do our part here.

2 What particularly appealed to you about carrying out your own research project?

Lara: Above all, the opportunity to carry out a project from start to finish. That’s rare at university. At the same time, we’re learning a lot about how research actually works, and can put what we’ve learned into practice right away. What’s particularly motivating is that we’re working on a topic that’s personally important to us.

3 What has been your experience with the research process so far?

Veronika: Research involves more organizational and piecemeal work than we initially expected—for example, when it comes to ethics applications. At the same time, we have seen just how open and supportive the research community is. That encourages us to keep going.

High and dry in the Philosophenturm



Art is back at the University of Hamburg's Philosophenturm following the return of a large three-panel painting by the renowned Austrian artist Oskar Kokoschka to Lecture Hall D on Von-Melle-Park campus. Due to extensive building renovations, the work *Thermopylae oder*

der Kampf um die Errettung des Abendlandes was put into storage in 2019. The triptych, which is popular with students and researchers, is now back in its place, with elaborate measures in place to keep it safe.

During the renovation of the tallest building on the Von-Melle-Park campus, Lecture Hall D received a sprinkler system capable of delivering several hectoliters of water from the ceiling into the room when the system is triggered. Because this could cause irreparable damage to the valuable painting, a team of experts from the University—led by the Center for Collections and in collaboration with Sprinkenhof

GmbH, a certified restorer, and the Hamburg Monument Protection Office—has developed a customized and well-thought-out protective solution for the artwork. Additional sealing tape has been used to ensure a watertight seal on the front glass and on the back of the triptych's frames. Moreover, the frames were reinforced with strips to create sufficient space for silica-gel sheets to minimize seasonal climate fluctuations and ensure moisture stability in the sealed frames.

On its return, Prof. Dr. Silke Segler-Meißner, dean of the Faculty of Humanities, emphasized the painting's significance: "For our faculty, the Kokoschka triptych is much more than a piece of art—it is a symbol of our campus identity, our academic culture, our tradition, and our commitment to creative and critical ways of thinking. The

triptych reminds us that sustaining the vibrant connection between art, history, and academia is essential to strengthening our common culture of thinking and learning in the long term. The Kokoschka forms part of the Faculty of Humanities, of the Philosophenturm—and vice versa."

The large-format painting *Thermopylae oder der Kampf um die Errettung des Abendlandes* was created in tempera on canvas by the renowned Austrian painter, graphic artist, and writer Oskar Kokoschka (1886–1980) for the University of Hamburg in 1954. In three scenes, it depicts the Greek narrative of the Battle of Thermopylae as reported by the ancient historian Herodotus.



A helping hand for your studies

Since Winter Semester 2015/16, the University of Hamburg #UHHhilft program has been supporting people who had to disrupt their studies or who couldn't start studying because they had to flee. The goal is to help them find a path into higher education. The project's 10th anniversary was celebrated on 18 November 2025, with a festive event in the atrium of the State and University Library. Among the guests of honor were Maryam Blumenthal—senator for science, research, and equality for the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg—and Prof. Dr. Natalia Filatkina, vice president for studies

and teaching at the University of Hamburg. In their opening remarks, both spoke of the special significance of #UHHhilft for the city of Hamburg and the University.

A key component of the program is its walk-in office hours, during which you can ask any questions you have about studying in Hamburg. In addition, the team helps with the verification of certificates. Weekly welcome classes are another key component of the program, providing information about studying and questions related to degree programs. In recent years, the

language courses offered by the University of Hamburg Language Center have also played an important role; approximately 50 spots were available there for participants in #UHHhilft. However, funding for this program expired at the start of Winter Semester 2025/26, so it no longer exists in this form. Nevertheless, the continuation of #UHHhilft and the ability to plan is currently assured, as the BWFG will continue funding through 2026.

Visit the #UHHhilft website



“Thanks to the support from #UHHhilft, I was able to bring my language proficiency up to C1 level and gain admission to the Master of Arts in Political Science.”

Sina, Master of Arts in Political Science

“For me, #UHHhilft was like a staircase that led me to my goal: a master's degree at the University of Hamburg. You supported me from my first steps until I reached my goal.”

Hamdam, Master of Arts in Journalism and Mass Communication

10 years of #UHHhilft

Facts and figures:



Traveling Together



From lab to market

Impossible Founders, the Hamburg-based Startup Factory

The Startup Factory competition, run by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy, aims to produce more science-based startups and more technology companies. Hamburg is one of 10 locations nationwide to have been selected for the program and will receive €10 million from the federal government over five years to establish efficient structures for supporting local startups.

An additional €40 million has been made available by Hamburg-based foundations and companies participating in this one-time collaborative grant application alongside the universities and research institutions in Hamburg and the metropolitan region, such as the Joachim Herz Stiftung, the Michael Otto Foundation, Hamburger

Sparkasse, the semiconductor manufacturer Nexperia, and the Otto Group. On behalf of the Senate, the initiative is particularly supported by Dr. Melanie Leonhardt, President of Hamburg’s Ministry of Economics, Labor and Innovation, and Maryam Blumenthal, President of Hamburg’s Ministry of Science, Research and Equality.

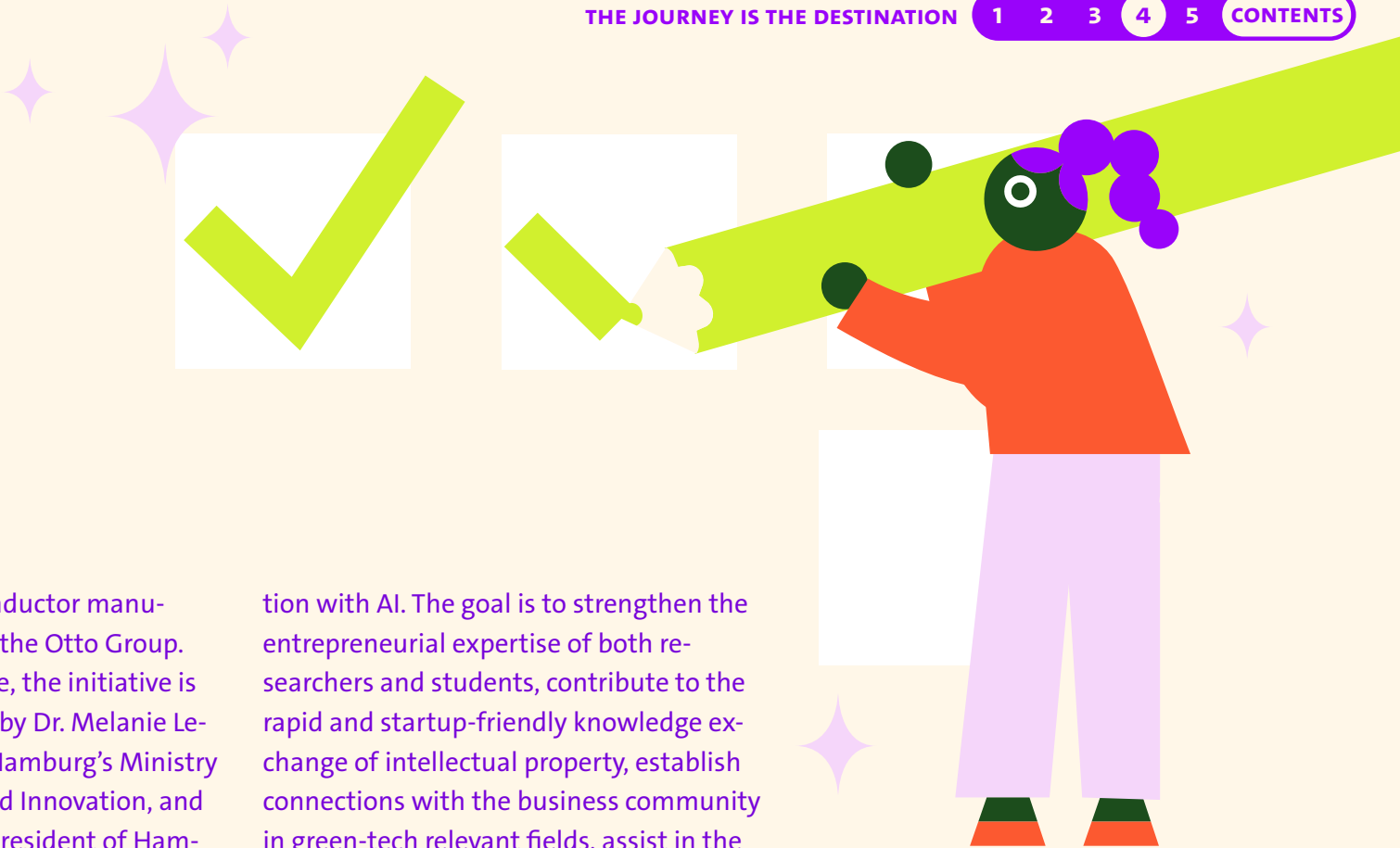
On 1 October 2025, Impossible Founders—the Hamburg-based Startup Factory located at Digital Hub Logistics in the Speicherstadt—officially launched operation. It will specifically support innovative and knowledge-based deep tech startups in the green tech sector. The focus here is on green technologies, particularly the development of new materials in conjunc-

tion with AI. The goal is to strengthen the entrepreneurial expertise of both researchers and students, contribute to the rapid and startup-friendly knowledge exchange of intellectual property, establish connections with the business community in green-tech relevant fields, assist in the search for investors, and provide startup teams with access to research infrastructure.

Thus, the Startup Factory solves a major problem for deep-tech startups, which face numerous risks after they are founded, generally have greater need for capital than other startups, and need to adapt their business models to changing social and economic conditions. However, support structures in Germany are rath-

er weak. While there are good funding programs for basic research, there is little support available for the high-risk phases of starting a business, such as scaling up. This is where the Impossible Founders come in: Together with Startup Port, it can provide support throughout every stage of the founder’s journey.

Visit the Impossible Founders website



Campus and city coming together

As host of the Campus Meets Community (CmC) Festival, the University of Hamburg opened its campus for knowledge exchange, new collaborations, and international perspectives.

From 18 to 20 September 2025, the University of Hamburg became a hub for academia, civil society, and social entrepreneurship.

Researchers, students, volunteers from initiatives and organizations, and international guests came together to brainstorm solutions to societal challenges and explore new forms of collaboration.

We'll be talking with Prof. Dr. Kai-Uwe Schnapp—dean of the Faculty of Business, Economics and Social Sciences—and Laura Adam, knowledge exchange officer of that faculty, about how this leads to new collaborations.



The CmC Festival organization team

Prof. Kai-Uwe Schnapp
Laura Adam

1 Universities are considered places of research and teaching, but the Campus Meets Community Festival consciously opened the campus up to the city. What happens when science and urban community truly come together?

Kai: This leads to an exchange that benefits both sides. As a university, we and our students have the opportunity to interact with people from civil society, politics, and business we would not otherwise meet. This gives rise to new perspectives and relevant questions. Our students, in particular, see firsthand what their field of study can achieve.

Members of the urban community, in turn, gain access to people who have the time to address issues that are important to them but often lack the resources to tackle them in their daily lives.

Laura: These kinds of encounters foster a deeper understanding of different working methods, issues, and challenges. This understanding is a key prerequisite for successful transdisciplinary collaboration.

The festival has created spaces where people from diverse professional and practical backgrounds can come together. It is precisely this diversity of perspectives that offers great potential for developing new approaches and fostering shared learning processes.

2 Was there an encounter or a moment that particularly demonstrated to you just how much potential this exchange holds?

Laura: I wouldn't attribute that to one single moment. The amount of participant feedback was particularly impressive. Many reported they had learned about new methods for their initiative, found potential academic partners for their

projects, or established key connections within the local community. The festival's potential lay in the multitude of encounters that paved the way for future collaborations.



3 One highlight was the matchmaking event, where societal needs met scientific expertise. What can come of such encounters?

Kai: Such encounters serve as the starting point for research collaborations. As a member of the urban community, I first need to get an idea of what the University can do for me.

And as a member of the University, I need to know who has interesting questions and wants to work with people from the University to find answers.

Laura: This kind of event allows social actors to contribute their expertise and communicate their needs. Collaborative research projects benefit from this combination of scientific expertise, practical experience, networks, and access to research fields. Only then is it possible to generate research-based knowledge that addresses specific societal challenges.

At the same time, such formats also provide opportunities for students to identify relevant research questions and meet potential partners for final theses or projects.

4 With guests from London Metropolitan University, the festival also gained an international perspective. What insights did you gain from this exchange?

Kai: Our colleagues in London have really shown us what is possible when an entire university sees itself as a partner to the community around it. There were some particularly important suggestions, especially regarding diversity. London, as a city, is far ahead of us in this regard—and the same goes for London Metropolitan University.

Laura: What really stuck with me was the motto “Business as unusual.” With initiatives such as the London Met Lab and the Rainbow Room, our colleagues in London have impressively demonstrated how established ways of thinking, working methods, and institutional spaces at universities can be systematically examined and developed to foster social innovation.

At the same time, it became clear how important it is to design structural frameworks to allow more flexible, needs-based, and sustainable cooperation with civil society actors.



5 During the discussion, the term “civic university”—that is, a university that actively engages with its local community—was also mentioned. What role can the University of Hamburg play in this?

Kai: A civic university uses the resources at its disposal to champion social change for and, above all, together with the urban community. This gives it the opportunity to be both an excellent research university and a civic university in its city or metropolitan area. In this way, we not only give back graduates to the city and the region but also contribute directly to socioeconomic transformation in our immediate surroundings through our daily research and academic work.

Laura: The Campus Meets Community Festival is a prime example of how a civic university can become most visible where encounters and collaboration actually take place. This is not only about the exchange of knowledge but also about shared processes of discussion and learning. Social challenges should not be addressed solely within the University but also in cooperation with those whom they directly affect.

In this sense, the University of Hamburg also serves as a testing ground: it can experiment with new forms of collaboration and feed new ideas back into the urban community. I think this is a significant contribution to the concept of the civic university.

University of Hamburg in Dialogue





Off to the AI Arena

A competition, entertainment, and an educational event all in one—on 12 June 2025, teams of school students and teams from Hamburg-based companies took to the stage at the AI Arena. The Artificial Intelligence Center Hamburg (ARIC) and the University of Hamburg developed an innovative game show styled as a generational AI challenge. It took a creative approach to teaching AI skills while bringing different age groups together in playful dialogue. In a variety of challenges, the teams programmed humanoid robots, identified deepfakes, designed prompts for AI models, and guessed AI-generated music tracks. The evaluation focused not only on technical knowledge but also on teamwork, creativity, and enthusiasm for technology. In a thrilling neck-and-neck race, young ultimately prevailed over old. The event was made possible thanks to financial support from the following sponsors: Aufbruch Hamburg, the Club of European Women Entrepreneurs (CeU), the HHAI Score Initiative in partnership with The Interface Society (THIS!), and the Hamburg Investment and Development Bank (IFB), as well as through the active support of our sponsors: Bücherhallen Hamburg, the Hamburg Institute for Vocational Education and Training (HIBB), PINKTUM, and the Ministry of Education, Family, and Vocational Training (BSFB). Following the premiere’s huge success, work is already underway to further develop the format.

“Our vision was a format where you don’t just learn about AI; you experience it, with curiosity, with fun, with a wide variety of people—students, parents, and working professionals. Our goal is to establish a broad foundation of AI expertise.”

Prof. Dr. Tilo Böhmann, vice president for research at the University of Hamburg



“With the world premiere of the AI Arena, we’ve shown that sharing this crucial AI expertise can be exciting, fun, and highly innovative.”

Marina Tcharnetsky, CBDO and ambassador at ARIC

“It was cool that we got to participate instead of just sitting around like we do in class. And it was also cool that we won something. It was really fun to play!”

Student and participant from a fifth grade class in Hamburg

“It was a very impressive, well-organized event. This is how you can combine knowledge, information, and fun when it comes to AI. Perfect.”

Alexandra, mother of a participating student and audience member



And action!



Working together
for a more sustaina-
ble Hamburg



“Science and scholarship are there for the city, especially in the face of difficult decisions. The Action Lab brings research and practice together: Which solutions actually work? What can be implemented? You can’t figure that out from behind a desk.”

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Hauke Heekeren, president of the University of Hamburg

On Friday, 28 November 2025, the Sustainability Week Action Lab opened its doors for the first time, creating a unique platform for interdisciplinary exchange between academia, civil society, and public administration. Under the motto “Thinking ahead for a sustainable Hamburg,” the event took place at the Design Zentrum Hamburg.

The event was opened by Katharina Fegebank, second mayor of Hamburg and senator for sustainability in the Ministry for the Environment, Climate, Energy, and Agriculture (BUKEA). The Action Lab was jointly organized by the BUKEA, the University of Hamburg Sustainability Office, and the Hamburg Sustainability Week project. Its aim was to collaboratively identify tensions and trade-offs within Hamburg’s sustainability strategy, develop practical and science-based solutions, and generate innovative impulses for the city’s future development. Particular attention was given to shaping the program for Hamburg Sustainability Week 2026.



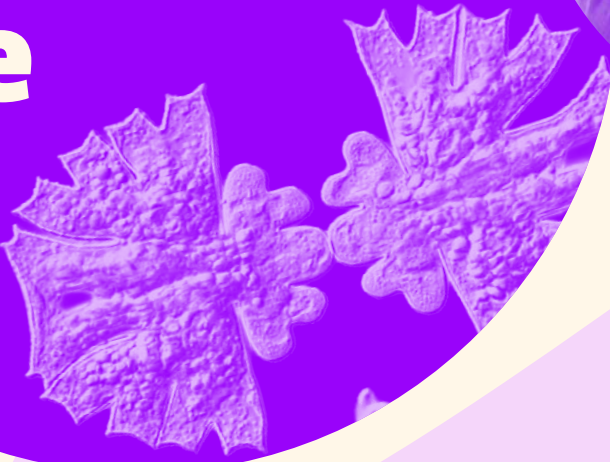
The University of Hamburg contributed a wide range of presentations, coordinated the participation of researchers from across Hamburg’s higher education landscape, and provided expertise for the workshops. Alongside generating concrete recommendations for action and ideas for Hamburg’s sustainability strategy, the event also strengthened networks and collaboration among the participating stakeholders.

Hamburg Sustainability Week is a project of the Hamburg Sustainability Conference gGmbH and is funded by the BUKEA. Designed as a public initiative, it offers several opportunities for citizens to engage actively with sustainability issues, connect with one another, and develop new ideas for sustainable transformation.

[Read more about the event](#)

Bioreactor for home use

Light-microscope image of an ornamental algae of the genus *Micras-terias*



In the algae lab, everyone becomes a researcher

How can microalgae contribute to a more sustainable future? This is the pivotal question for the new knowledge exchange project at the University of Hamburg. In the Lab of Tomorrow, which will open its doors in the University Museum on 30 October 2025, the spotlight—and the microscope—will focus on these tiny but multifaceted organisms. Here, anyone can become a researcher. “Our goal is to create a place for everyone where we do research, think, and discuss together,” said Dr.

Antje Nagel, University Museum director and project initiator.

Microalgae bond with carbon dioxide, produce oxygen, purify water, and can form the basis for biomat-ter. “Microalgae are miniscule solar-driven factories. In only a milliliter of culture, millions of cells work synchronously to convert light, water, and carbon di-oxide into valuable bonds that can also replace fossil fuels,” explains Dr. Abdelfatah Abomohra, who is providing scientific guidance on the project along with Prof. Dr. Dieter Hanelt. Both work in the University of Hamburg’s Department of Biology, researching how algae can be used to sustainably exploit energy and resources and to clean the environment.

Through discussions, experiments, or developing their own research questions, anyone interested is invited to get involved in the algae lab. The program also includes workshops for different target groups and a lecture series with experts working in research and the climate and water economy. One highlight is the research-at-home program, in which participants build their own small bioreactors to cultivate microalgae, take them home, document their observations, and share them with researchers. The project also colla-borates with a local Hamburg secondary school to bring young people into direct contact with the re-search. “We want to bring science and society together through public participation in the Lab of Tomorrow. We would like for everyone not only to learn science but to also experience science,” emphasizes Abomoh-ra.

The project is part of the Hamburg Ministry of Science, Research and Equality’s Calls for Transfer funding measure. The lab will remain in place after this pilot project to offer further interactive research projects at the University of Hamburg.

[Read more about the Lab of Tomorrow](#)

Strength in numbers

Cooperation on data and digital science centers

Research involving large datasets and digital methods has become part of everyday practice in nearly all disciplines. However, the potential for scientific and societal innovation has so far been insufficiently tapped. Data and digital science combine methodological expertise—for example, in data analysis and artificial intelligence—with domain-specific knowledge, thereby laying the groundwork for new research approaches in virtually all disciplines. This role requires systematic integration into universities. This is why researchers from 21 German and Austrian research institutions, including the pioneering University of Hamburg, are now demanding greater political and scientific commitment to digital and data science.

For this reason, an initiative was launched to establish the national Data & Digital Science Community e.V. (DaDiSC). This is the result of cooperation between the Hub of Computing and Data Science (HCDS) at the University of Hamburg, the University of Bremen, and Kiel University. It brings together institutions in the German-speaking world that focus on the digitalization of research. The goal of this networking initiative is to ensure the

integration of innovative research methods and systematic feedback into teaching and to raise the profile thereof in the academic system, which is pivotal to the future of universities.

The initiative made its first very clear statement with the “Position Paper on the Future of the Data and Digital Science Community.” Martin Semmann, managing director of the HCDS at the University of Hamburg, and Chris Biemann, professor of language technology and scientific director of the HCDS, are 2 of the 40 researchers who jointly wrote and signed a position paper on the future of the data and digital science community. They demand that central institutions, such as data- and digital-science centers, be equipped reliably in order to sustainably support data-intensive and digitally supported research. Currently, project-based funding is often standard.

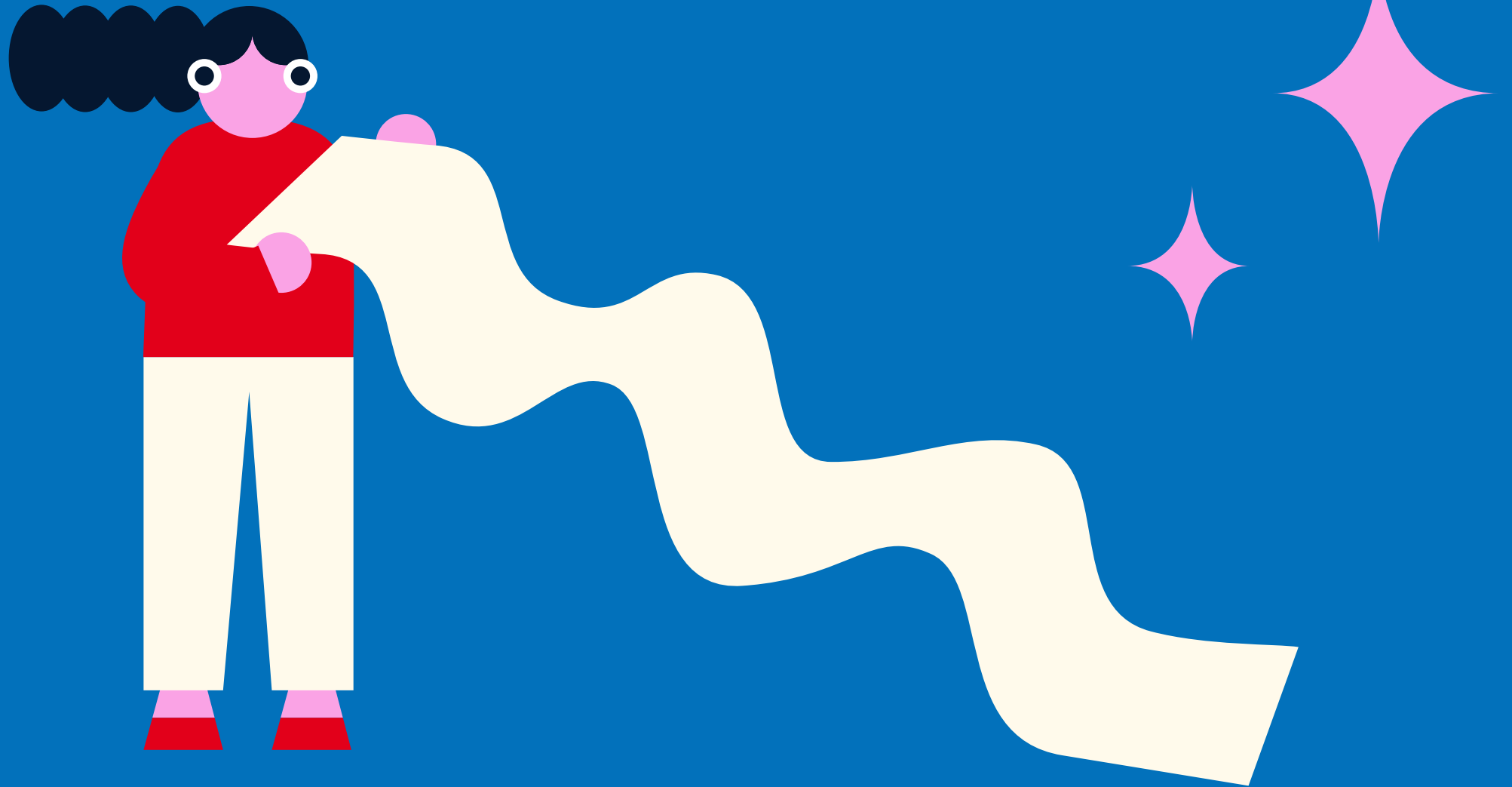


“DaDiSc, as an alliance of data and digital centers, is an exciting focal point for modern research infrastructure. It is precisely in the exchange and development of shared positions that a strong signal can be sent within academia for tackling overarching challenges together and finding solutions. From the perspective of the HCDS, with its specific, strongly research-oriented focus, it can provide new ideas and teach us a great deal from the exchange on scaling teaching formats as well as adapt these insights for Hamburg.”

Dr. Martin Semmann

[Read the position paper](#)

Appendixes



General statistics

↪ 8 faculties

↪ 167 buildings

↪ 386,000 m² usable floor space

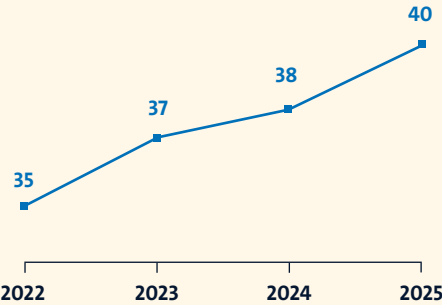
University of Hamburg national and international rankings, 2025

Diversity

	UHH total 2025	of which MED 2025
Percentage of female students	58%	63%
Percentage of female academic staff (incl. professors)	49%	54%
Percentage of international students	14%	11%
Percentage of international academic staff (incl. professors)	19%	14%

5,025 international students and doctoral researchers from 138 countries.

Percentage of female professors
(excl. Faculty of Medicine) in %



Ranking	Abbreviation	National Rank	Internat. Rank
Academic Ranking of World Universities	ARWU	19	221
Center for Science and Technology Studies Leiden Ranking	CWTS	5	183
Center for World University Rankings	CWUR	11	187
National Taiwan University Ranking	NTU	7	134
Quacquarelli Symonds World University Rankings	QS	9	193
Quacquarelli Symonds Sustainability Ranking	QS	1	46
Times Higher Education World University Rankings	THE	11	125
University Ranking by Academic Performance	URAP	7	167
US News & World Report Best Global Universities Rankings	USNEWS	6	141
Webometrics		4	134

Source: Section 13: Institutional Research.

View the rankings

International

Top 10 countries of origin of foreign students

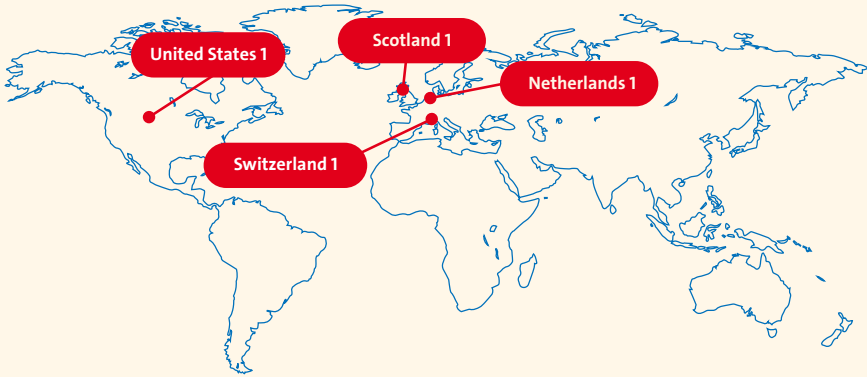
Source: Student statistics as of 1 December.



International appointments

Note: For 2025 appointments, service may not start until 2026.

Source: Professorial Appointments Unit.



Studies and teaching

Students and applicants

	University total 2025
Total Students	43,134
Bachelor's students	20,364
Master's students	9,060
Students completing other examinations (state examination, ecclesiastical examination)	7,654
Students completing old degree programs (Diplom etc.)	295
Students completing continuing education and supplementary courses	529
Incoming students	289
Doctoral students	4,943
Applicants (excl. MED)	46,294
First-year students in their first semester (undergraduate and consecutive master's)	10,325

Degrees

	2025
Total degrees	5,764
Bachelor's	2,671
Master's	2,243
Further examinations (state examination, ecclesiastical)	710
Old degree programs (e.g., Diplom)	6
Continuing education and supplementary courses	134
Doctorates	899

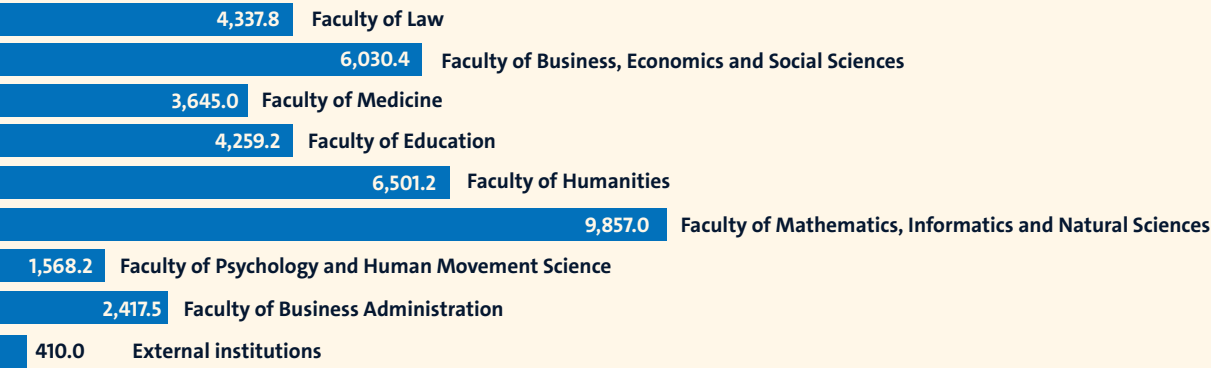
Source: Examination statistics (information by examination year: summer semester and previous winter semester); including Faculty of Medicine / UKE.

Number of doctoral students

	2025
Total enrolled doctoral students	5,774
Female	53%
Male	46%
International	23%

Source: Official student statistics as of 1 December.
Note: Winter semester of the academic year (summer semester + winter semester), deviating from the table above including doctoral students who are enrolled in a degree program at the same time.

Students in FTE per faculty



Source: Student statistics as of the reporting date 1 December 2025.
FTE = full-time equivalent.
Notes: The figures do not include doctoral students. The teaching demand is shown in FTEs, weighted according to the credit points to be earned in major, minor, and teaching subject subcourses, which makes the student activities—for example, in the teaching subjects at the Faculties of Humanities and Mathematics, Informatics and Natural Sciences—more visible. The total number of FTEs in 2025 was 39,026.16. External institutions include the cooperative degree programs with the Hamburg Media School and teaching subject sub-courses at the cooperating Hamburg universities for teacher training.

Habilitations

	2025
Total habilitations	56
By female students	45%
By international students	5%

Source: University Statistics
Note: Habilitations are surveyed per calendar year.

Study programs

	2025
Total study programs	187
Bachelor's degree programs	74
Master's degree programs	96
Degree programs with state and other examinations	6
Continuing education, postgraduate and supplementary programs	11

Source: Student statistics for the reporting dates 30 May and 1 December.

Research

Research

	University total, 2025
Clusters of excellence	4
Collaborative research centers (spokespersons)	10
Research training groups (spokespersons)	7
Research groups (spokespersons)	18
Projects funded by federal ministries (from €500,000)	56

Source: GEPRIS, federal funding catalog (as of April 2026).

Current third-party funds

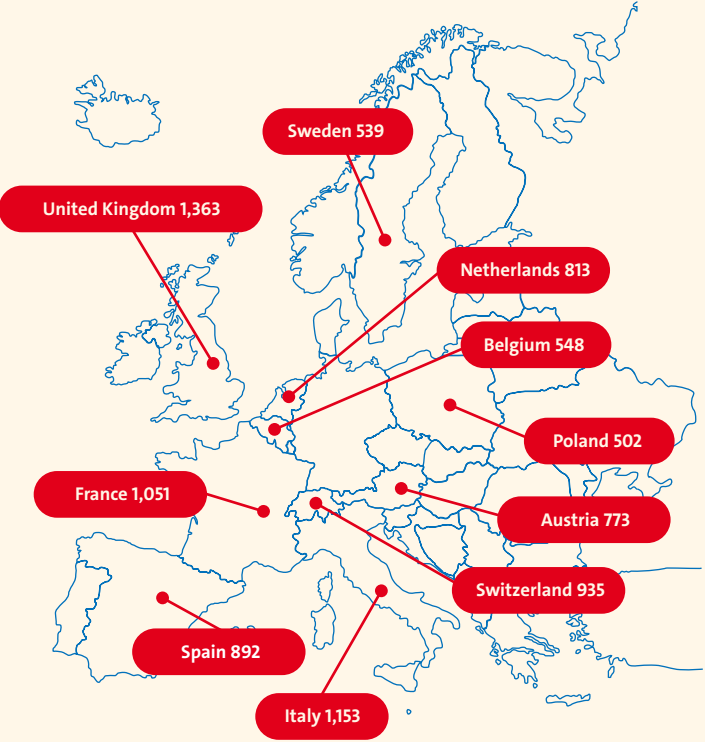
	2022	2023	2024	2025
Total EU projects	178	157	146	188

Source: Department 4 and UKE statistics.

	2022	2023	2024	2025
Total ERC Grants	25	35	46	48
Faculty of Medicine / UKE	10	11	16	19

Source: SAP report and information of UKE statistics.

Copublications with European partners: Top 10 countries, 2025



University of Hamburg publication output and citation impact, 2022–2025

	2022	2023	2024	2025
Publications	7,365	6,923	7,237	7,227
International publications	4,149	3,919	4,164	4,350
Share of intl. publications	56%	57%	58%	60%
FWCI University of Hamburg	1.50	1.48	1.85	1.57
FWCI excl. universities	1.30	1.33	1.32	1.25

Source: SciVal (retrieved on 25 February 2026).
Note: All publication types and excluding self-citation at FWCI.

Employees

Employees

	Total 2025	of which MED 2025
Employees in FTE	14,536.7	9,958.2
Academic staff (including professors)	5,546.0	2,982.5
Professors	710.0	173.7
Academic staff	4,836.0	2,808.8
Technical, administrative and library staff	8,990.7	6,975.7

FTE = full-time equivalent

Source: University personnel statistics as of 1 December and data from the Faculty of Medicine / UKE (including the University Heart and Vascular Center Hamburg at UKE)

	Total 2025	of which MED 2025
Employees	16,670	11,316
Academic staff	6,516	3,448
Professors	720	179
of which not externally funded	665	147
Academic staff (excluding professors)	5,796	3,269
of which not externally funded	3,827	2,362
of which permanent	2,907	2,416
Technical, administrative and library staff	10,154	7,868
of which not externally funded	9,736	7,502
of which UKE nursing staff	3,567	3,567

Source: University personnel statistics as of 1 December and data from the Faculty of Medicine / UKE (including the University Heart and Vascular Center Hamburg at UKE)
Notes: Counting method by person, total number without double counting; allocation of staff to the type of funding is based on the predominant funding according to the University Statistics Team.

Financial data

Financial data

(incl. Faculty MED/UKE) in €	Total 2025
State funds (incl. investments)	698,473,976
University of Hamburg third-party funds	324,341,485

The data does not include forwarded funds. The definition of third-party funding corresponds to the sum of third-party funds [Dr1b] according to KDSF and additional third-party funds.

Third-party funding income of the University of Hamburg

(incl. Faculty MED/UKE) in €	Total 2025
Total third-party [Dr1b] and additional third-party funding	323,240,562
Total third-party funding [Dr1b]	294,496,670
DFG [Dr21]	132,446,806
of which research vessels	28,277,710
EU [Dr95]	22,721,891
Federal government [Dr22]	57,001,715
Industry and other private sector [Dr25]	32,696,411
Other third-party donors [Dr141]	49,629,847
Total additional third-party funding	28,743,89
FHH ¹	14,825,115
Federal government ² and others ³	11,178,053
Research services (industry)	2,740,724

Source: University finance statistics, Section 72: Financial Controlling, Section 75: External Funding Management, and the Faculty of Medicine's external funding administration.

Note: Rows marked with [] were delimited according to the definition of the core dataset for research. The data do not include forwarded funds and therefore differ from previous annual reports.

"Other third-party funding providers" includes funds from foundations [Dr26], university funding organizations from Germany [Dr132] (e.g., DAAD), and other public funds [Dr101].

1 Includes University of Excellence funds, state research funding, BWFGF funds for the clusters

2 Includes University of Excellence funds, tenure-track funds

3 Includes personal scholarships and mentoring funds from third parties.

Overview of income of the University of Hamburg

(without Faculty MED/UKE) in € million	2023	2024	2025
Total income	642.3	646.7	669.8
Allocations from FHH	413.8	411.4	430.3
Income from other grant providers	170.4	169.4	174.5
Other income	58.1	65.9	65.0

Source: Department. 7: Finance and Accounting

Overview of expenses of the University of Hamburg

(without Faculty MED/UKE) in € million	2023	2024	2025
Total expenses	644.8	666.2	682.9
Personnel expenses	419.0	430.6	455.8
Material expenses	200.6	209.3	200.2
Depreciation and amortization	25.2	26.3	26.9

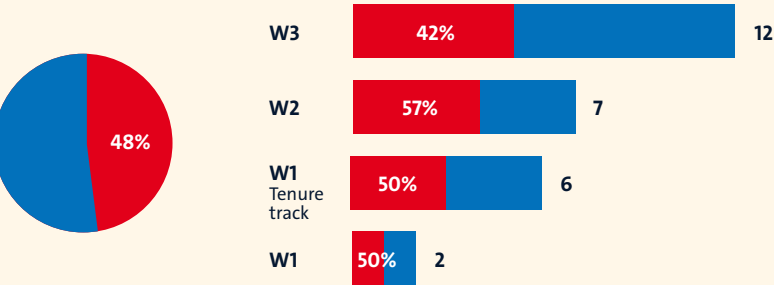
Source: Department. 7: Finance and Accounting

Appointment statistics

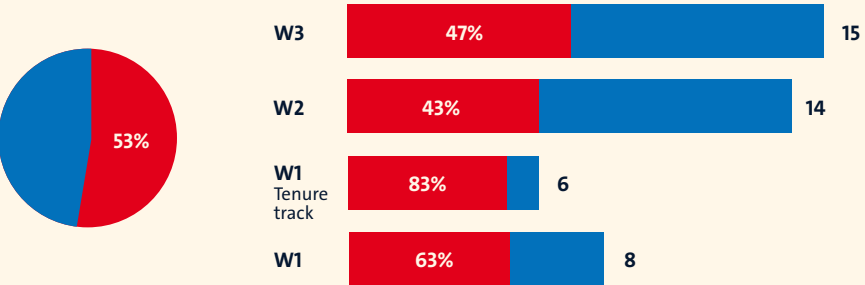
Number of appointments

Note: For 2025 appointments, service may not start until 2026.

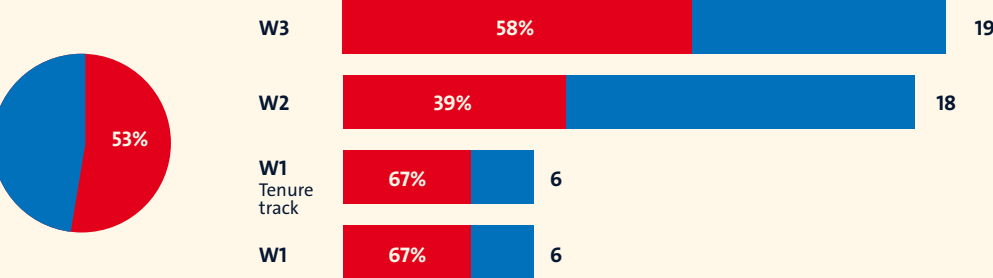
Total 2022: 27 appointments accepted
48% female



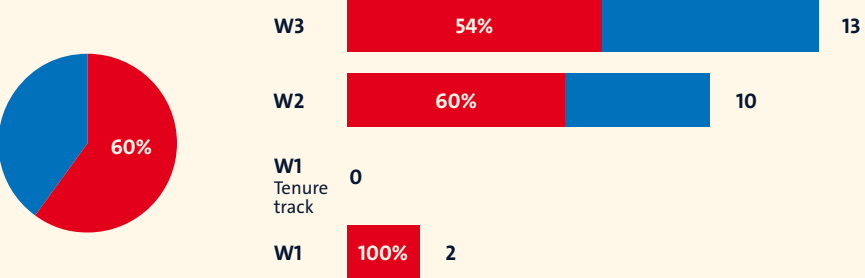
Total 2023: 43 appointments accepted
53% female



Gesamt 2024: 49 appointments accepted
53% female



Total 2025: 25 appointments accepted
60% female



Total appointments accepted: ● **Percentage of female appointees:** ●
Note: Professorial Appointments Unit

Appointment statistics

New appointments at the University of Hamburg (excl. Faculty of Medicine and UKE), 2025

Note: For 2025 appointments, service may not start until 2026.

Professors

Faculty	Name	Denomination
Faculty of Business, Economics and Social Sciences	Balietti, Anca	Sustainability Economics
Hamburg Business School	Brinkmann, Carolin	Health Care Management
Faculty of Humanities	Burkhardt, Stefanie	Protestant Theology: Intercultural Theology and Religious Studies
Faculty of Business, Economics and Social Sciences	Gessler, Theresa	Political Science with a Focus on Democratic Political Decision-Making
Faculty of Mathematics, Informatics and Natural Sciences	Graf, Markus	Physics with a Focus on Micro- and Nanotechnology and Sustainable Environmental Sensor Systems
Faculty of Mathematics, Informatics and Natural Sciences	Hanson, Jack	Mathematics with a Focus on Random/Stochastic Geometry
Faculty of Humanities	Hutta, Jan Simon	Anthropological Studies in Culture and History
Faculty of Mathematics, Informatics and Natural Sciences	Kleist, Linda	Theoretical Computer Science (Algorithms and Complexity)
Faculty of Education	Krelle, Michael	Education with a Focus on German Language and Literature Education in Primary Schools
Faculty of Mathematics, Informatics and Natural Sciences	Kütt, Moritz	Peace and conflict research in the natural sciences
Faculty of Humanities	Mackert, Nina	North American History and Public History
Faculty of Education	Nagy, Gabriel	Education Science with a Focus on the Design of International Comparative Studies
Faculty of Education	Sack, Mira	Education with a Focus on Teaching Theater
Faculty of Mathematics, Informatics and Natural Sciences	Trujillo Linke, Marco	Biology with a Focus on Resistance in Plant-Pathogen Interactions
Faculty of Education	Walgenbach, Katharina	Education with a Focus on Education and Society
Faculty of Law	Wendel, Mattias	Public Law and European Law
Faculty of Mathematics, Informatics and Natural Sciences	Zeller-Lanzl, Julia	Digital Innovation and Transformation

View current appointments

Joint appointments at the University of Hamburg (excl. Faculty of Medicine and UKE), 2025

Note: For 2025 appointments, service may not start until 2026.

Professors

Faculty	Name	Denomination	Joint appointment with
Faculty of Mathematics, Informatics and Natural Sciences	Herr, Helena	Marine Mammal Ecology	Alfred Wegener Institute Helmholtz Centre for Polar and Marine Research
Faculty of Business, Economics and Social Sciences	Mohr, Cathrin	Economics with a Focus on International Political Economics and Geoeconomics	Kiel Institute for the World Economy (IfW)
Faculty of Mathematics, Informatics and Natural Sciences	Otto, Thomas Dan	Pathogenome Bioinformatics	Bernhard Nocht Institute for Tropical Medicine (BNITM)
Faculty of Mathematics, Informatics and Natural Sciences	Pfänder, Stephanie	Emerging Viruses	Leibniz Institute of Virology (LIV)
Faculty of Mathematics, Informatics and Natural Sciences	Redlich, Britta	Physics with a Focus on Photon Research	DESY
Faculty of Humanities	Richter, Sandra	Modern German Literature	German Literature Archive (DLA)
Faculty of Business, Economics and Social Sciences	Rödder, Simone	Social Transformation Research and Museum Development	Leibniz Institute for the Analysis of Biodiversity Change (LIB)
Faculty of Business, Economics and Social Sciences	Zimmermann, Kaspar	Economics with a Focus on International Economics and Finance	Kiel Institute for the World Economy (IfW)

Central bodies of the University of Hamburg

Among the University of Hamburg’s central bodies are the Executive University Board pursuant to Section 79 of the Hamburg higher education act (Hamburgisches Hochschulgesetz, HmbHG), the Academic Senate pursuant to Section 85 HmbHG, and the University Council pursuant to Section 84 HmbHG.

Executive University Board

As of 31 December 2025, the Executive University Board consisted of the following:

- President Univ.-Prof. Dr. Hauke Heekeren
- Vice President Prof. Dr. Jetta Frost
- Vice President Prof. Dr. Natalia Filatkina
- Vice President Prof. Dr. Tilo Böhmman
- Head of Administration Dr. Martin Hecht
- Chief Digitalization Officer Prof. Dr.-Ing. Sebastian Gerling
- Chief Sustainability Officer Prof. Dr. Laura Marie Edinger-Schons

Academic Senate

As of 31 December 2025, the Academic Senate had the following members (deputies in parentheses):

Professorial staff representatives

- Prof. Dr. Peter Burger (Prof. Dr. Kathrin Dausmann)
- Prof. Dr. Petra Berenbrink (Prof. Dr. Ulf Kühn)
- Prof. Dr. Philippe Depreux (Prof. Dr. Thomas Weber)
- Prof. Dr. Martin Baisch (Prof. Dr. Claudia Schindler)
- Prof. Dr. Jörn Behrens (Prof. Dr. Sandra Sprenger)
- Prof. Dr. Martina Seifert (Prof. Dr. Dietmar Höttecke)

- Prof. Dr. Kerstin Lopatta (Prof. Dr. Florian Grüner)
- Prof. Dr. Gurdird Moortgat-Pick (Prof. Dr. Robi Banerjee)
- Prof. Dr. Michel Clement (Prof. Dr. Jannis Androutsopoulos)
- Prof. Dr. Iris Wenderholm (Prof. Dr. Georg Ringe)

Academic staff representatives

- Dr. Marc-Olivier Hinzelin (Florian Muhl)
- Gunda Mohr (Dr. Sören Deister)
- Dr. med. Alexander Schultze (Prof. Dr. med. Ibrahim Nergiz)

Technical, library and administrative staff representatives

- Antje Newig (René König)
- Bettina Leipold (Dr. Hans Behringer)
- Rainer Floigl (Dr. Katrin Klempahn)

Student representatives

- Jonas Evers (Marlene Wieder)
- Antonia Peikert (Mathis Lorenzen)
- Hendrik Jensen (Juri Fichter)

Members with advising rights pursuant to the University of Hamburg Statutes

- Members of the Executive University Board
- AStA representative
- Equal opportunity commissioner
- Representative for students with disabilities and chronic illnesses
- Staff council chairs

University Council

As of 31 December 2025, the University of Hamburg’s University Council members consisted of:

- Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Petra Wend
- Prof. Dr. Olaf Köller
- Prof. Dr. Alexander Bassen
- Prof. Dr. Vincent Heuveline
- Dr. Michael Heller
- Prof. Dr. Annette Kehnel
- Prof. Dr. Joern Pütz
- Prof. Dr. Birgitta Wolff
- Prof. Dr. Gudrid Moortgat-Pick

Central bodies of the University of Hamburg

Offices of the Dean

On the day of reporting, the deans of the faculties were as follows:

Faculty of Law

- Dean: Prof. Dr. Tilman Repgen
- Vice dean for studies and teaching: Prof. Dr. Dr. Milan Kuhli
- Vice dean for international relations:
Prof. Dr. Markus Kotzur, LL.M. (Duke)
- Faculty manager: Kristina Hohendorf

Faculty of Business, Economics and Social Sciences

- Dean: Prof. Dr. Kai-Uwe Schnapp
- Vice dean for academic affairs: Prof. Dr. Sebastian Späth
- Vice dean for research: Prof. Dr. Olaf Posch
- Vice dean for academic culture and careers: Prof. Dr. Miriam Beblo
- Faculty manager: Dr. Stephan Michel

Faculty of Medicine

- Dean: Prof. Dr. Blanche Schwappach-Pignatoro
- Vice dean for student affairs: Prof. Dr. rer. nat. Dr. med. habil. Andreas Guse
- Vice dean for research: Prof. Dr. med. Petra Arck
- Vice dean for academic procedures: Prof. Dr. med. Heimo Ehmke
- Vice dean for clinical research and translation: Prof. Dr. med. Götz Thomalla
- Managing director: Heike Koll

Faculty of Education

- Dean: Prof. Dr. Claus Krieger
- Vice dean for research and support for doctoral and early career researchers: Prof. Dr. Barbara Hänel-Faulhaber
- Vice dean for studies, teaching, and examinations:
Prof. Dr. Nils Buchholtz
- Faculty manager: Kerstin Schweizer-Laurentin

Faculty of Humanities

- Dean: Prof. Dr. Silke Segler-Meißner
- Vice dean for studies and teaching: Prof. Dr. Christoph Dartmann
- Vice dean for research: Prof. Dr. Anselm Steiger
- Vice dean for international affairs and support for doctoral and early career researchers: Prof. Dr. Martina Seifert
- Faculty manager: Christoph Rettberg

Faculty of Mathematics, Informatics and Natural Sciences

- Dean: Prof. Dr. Norbert Ritter
- Vice dean for strategic and structural development:
Prof. Dr. Kai Jensen
- Vice dean for studies, teaching and career development:
Prof. Dr. Eschenbach
- Vice dean for research, internationalization and technology transfer: Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Hillert
- Faculty manager: Dr. Katrin Seelhorst

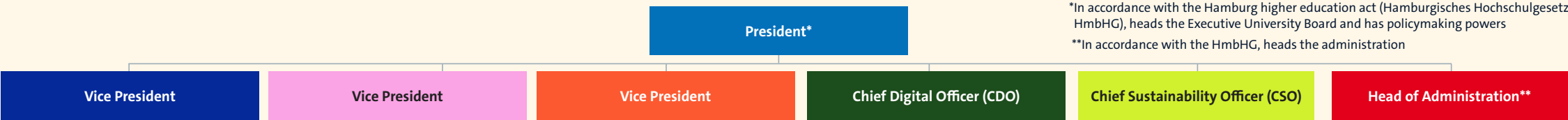
Faculty of Psychology and Human Movement

- Dean: Prof. Dr. Ulf Liszkowski
- Vice dean of research and transfer:
Prof. Dr. Nale Lehmann-Willenbrock
- Vice dean of studies and teaching and internationalization:
Prof. Dr. Erin Gerlach
- Faculty manager: Aleksandra Pilpidis

Faculty of Business Administration

- Dean: Prof. Dr. Petra Steinorth
- Vice dean for studies and teaching: Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Brüggemann
- Vice dean for research and graduate education:
Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Fliedner
- Vice dean: Prof. Dr. Henrik Sattler
- Faculty manager: Imme Godthardt

University of Hamburg organigram



Departments

University Strategy	Communication and Marketing	Studies and Teaching	Research Management and Funding	International Affairs	Human Resources	Finance and Accounting	Property Management
University Development	Media and Public Relations	Advising and administration	Research Management I	Strategy and Partnerships	Strategic HR Development and Recruiting	Financial Accounting	Commercial Property Management
Excellence Strategy	Digital Communication and Design	Quality Management and Legal Affairs	Research Management II	International Student Services and Mobility	HR Services for Employees	Controlling	Facility Management
Key Figures and University Statistics	Marketing and Cooperation	Campus Management	Early Career Research Support	Translation Office	HR Services for Professors, Civil Servants, and Student Employees	Purchasing and Travel Management	Technical Site Management and Services
	University Museum and Center for Collections and Museums	Campus Center			HR Cost Control and Position Management	Tax, Investment, and Asset Management	Project Management for Major Construction Projects
	Unikontor					External Funding Management	Construction Project Management
							Campus Development

Units

Occupational Safety and Environmental Protection Unit
Professorial Appointments Unit
Equal Opportunity
Internal Auditing and Anti-Corruption Unit
Legal Unit
Smart Administration Unit
Conference Management and Lecture Hall Allocation Unit

Academic services

Knowledge Exchange Agency	University Language Center	Center for Continuing Education (ZfW)	Loki Schmidt Garden
Digital Office	Sustainability Office	Hamburg Research Academy (HRA)	University Archives
Center for Sustainable Research Data Management (FDM)	Regional Computing Center (RRZ)	Hub of Computing and Data Science (HCDS)	Hub of Academic Career & Research Culture (HARC)

University-wide institutions

University Sports	University Music
Scientific Collections and Museums	Center for the History of the University of Hamburg
Center for Gender and Diversity (ZGD)	Library Matters and Information Provision

Central interfaculty centers and joint-faculty centers

Hamburg Center for University Teaching and Learning (HUL)	Center for Interdisciplinary Studies and Academic Skills
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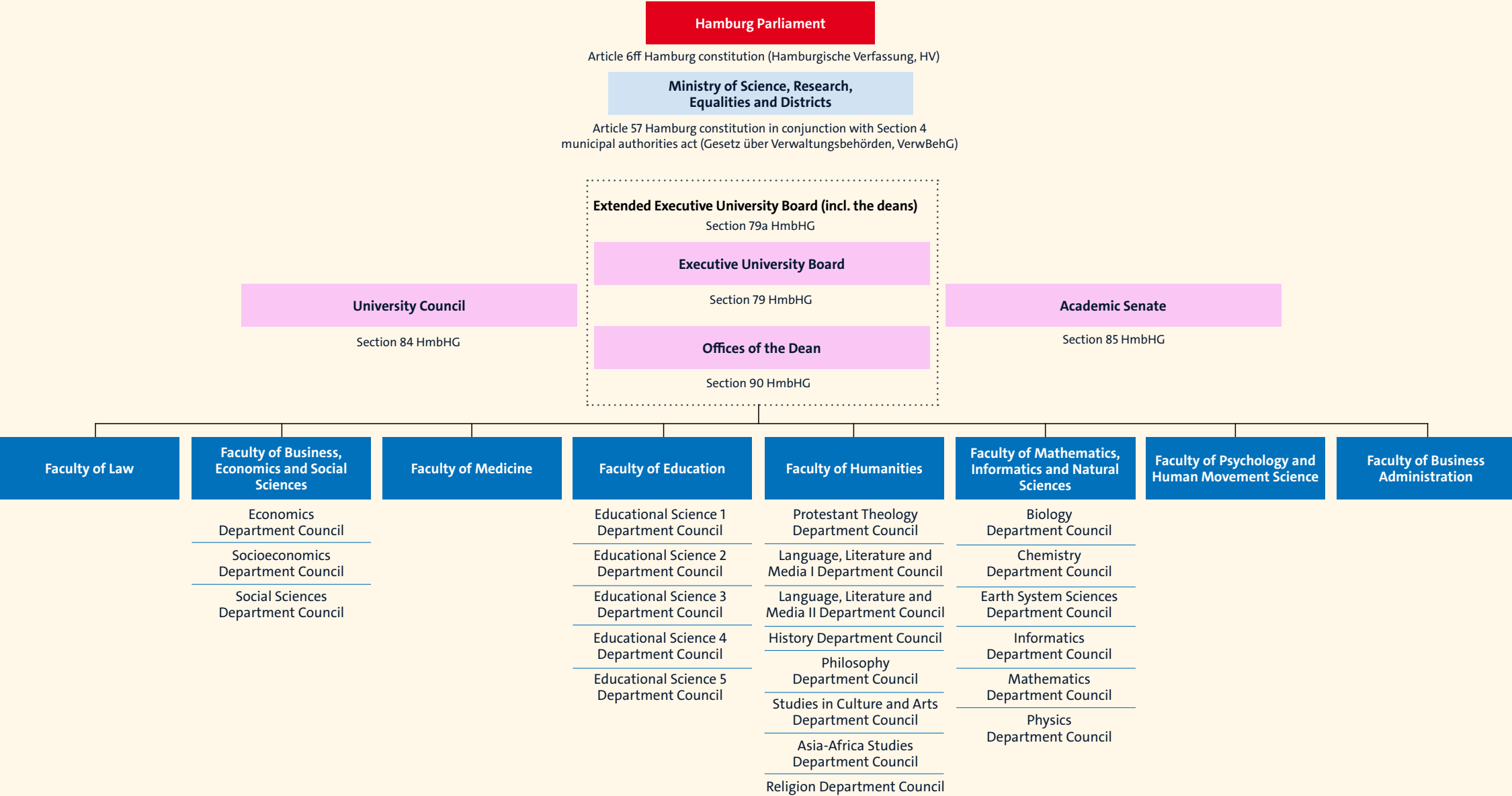
Faculties

Faculty of Law	Faculty of Business, Economics and Social Sciences	Faculty of Medicine	Faculty of Education	Faculty of Humanities	Faculty of Mathematics, Informatics and Natural Sciences	Faculty of Psychology and Human Movement Science	Faculty of Business Administration
	Department of Economics	*The University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf (UKE) is an affiliate of the University of Hamburg. It consists of the Faculty of Medicine and the former University Hospital Eppendorf.	Department of General, Intercultural and International Comparative Education as well as Educational Psychology	Department of Protestant Theology	Department of Biology	Institute of Psychology	
	Department of Socioeconomics			Department of Languages, Literature and Media I	Department of Chemistry	Institute of Human Movement Science	
	Department of Social Sciences		Department of Primary and Secondary Education, Social Pedagogy as well as Special Needs Education	Department of Languages, Literature and Media II	Department of Earth System Sciences		
			Department of Professional Education and Life-Long Learning	Department of History	Department of Informatics		
			Department of Languages and Aesthetic Disciplines Education	Department of Philosophy	Department of Mathematics		
			Department of Social Sciences, Mathematics and Natural Sciences Education	Department of Cultural Studies	Department of Physics		
				Asien-Afrika-Institut			
				Department of Religions			

University research centers

Interinstitutional Centers	Interfaculty Centers	Faculty Centers	Associated Institutes
Center for Free-Electron Laser Science (CFEL)	Hamburg Center for Health Economics (HCHE)	Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker Center for Science and Peace Research (ZNF)	Research Center for Contemporary History in Hamburg (FZH)
Centre for Structural Systems Biology (CSSB)	Research Center for Media and Communication (RCMC)	Center for Hybrid Nanostructures (CHYN)	Hans-Bredow-Institut for Media Research Leibniz Institute of Virology (LIV)
German Center for Infection Research (DZIF)	Earth and Society Research Hub (ESRAH)	Center for Sustainable Society Research (CSS)	Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy (IFSH) at the University of Hamburg
Partnership for Innovation, Education and Research (PIER)		Center in Hamburg for Astrophysics, Mathematical Physics and Particle Physics (CHAMPP)	Institute for European Integration at the Europa-Kolleg Hamburg
		Literacy in Diversity Settings (LiDS) (research center and profile initiative)	Academy of Mission at the University of Hamburg
		Lothar Collatz Center for Computing in Science	Nordost-Institut Lüneburg Institut für Kultur und Geschichte der Deutschen in Nordosteuropa (IKGN) at the University of Hamburg
		Centre for Ultrafast Imaging (CUI)	
		Center for Mathematical Physics (CMP)	
		Center for Optical Quantum Technologies (ZOQ)	

University of Hamburg organigram



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